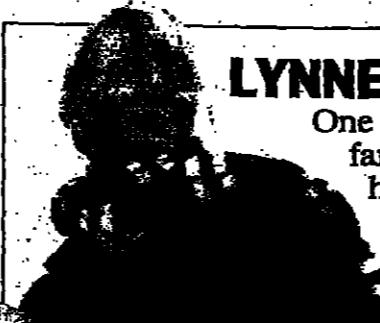


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TOMORROW AND ALL NEXT WEEK

## THE McALPINE DIARIES

The most explosive political  
memoirs of the yearIN TOMORROW'S WEEKEND  
Sandra Parsons meets  
Alistair McAlpine

PATRICK BURROWS

Labour abandons confidence vote

Ulster deal to  
protect Major  
until May 1

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLLY NEWTON AND NICHOLAS WATT

**Jury trial curbs.**  
John Major's lifeline that should keep him in power until May 1 yesterday after the Government agreed to increase the powers of the special parliamentary committee that monitors Northern Ireland.

The deal was announced by the Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, who made clear that he saw no point in trying to force an early election. He added that his personal preference was for a late contest.

Labour cannot force the Government out of office without Unionist backing, so it abandoned thoughts of staging a Commons confidence vote next week, fearing that it would merely give the Government a chance to rally and regroup after yesterday's Wirral South by-election.

Donald Dewar, the Chief Whip, said: "I am sorry, we cannot go ahead. I would like to have gone ahead, but there is no point in putting down a motion without the Ulster Unionists."

Mr Trimble did not rule out voting against the Government when he announced the grand committee deal yesterday, but the tone of his remarks fitted in with his privately-held view that his party had nothing to gain by doing so. Senior Unionists believe that the next Government, of whatever hue, would distract a minor party that was prepared to side with the Opposition on such a crucial vote.

Mr Trimble was dismissive

of the prospects of an early election. "What is the point for a couple of weeks? If you have an early election, you would have Easter in the middle of the campaign. I can see arguments pro and con, possibly more than pro. What is the point of them [Labour] putting a big effort in when all the difference is three weeks?" He was not even sure that Labour was in a position to get all its MPs to Westminster to a vote aimed at bringing down the Government.

And he added that for "selfish personal reasons" he would prefer a May 1 poll, as he was hoping to spend St Patrick's Day in America.

Unionists were delighted that ministers had met many of their demands for new powers for a Northern Ireland Grand Committee in line with those in Wales and Scotland. The powers, promised by Mr Major last October, were agreed after extensive consultation and Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, has written to each of the party leaders in Northern Ireland setting out the details of the new-look

committee.

All Northern Ireland MPs and up to 24 other MPs will serve on the committee, which will be able to question ministers on Province spending commitments announced in the Budget, interrogate all ministers about Northern Ireland affairs, and stage some meetings in Northern Ireland as well as Westminster. It will also be able to consider uncontroversial legislation affecting the Province.

However, nationalists have objected to such powers being conferred on the committee, seeing it as part of an integrationist agenda.

The Government's decision to beef up the committee came as ministers prepared to accede to Northern Ireland politicians' calls for the Stormont talks to be adjourned for the duration of the election campaign. The talks, which have failed to make any real progress since they opened last June, will be wound up next Wednesday until after the local government elections in Northern Ireland on May 21.

Mr Trimble said that other government moves — ranging from pressure on Brussels to lift the ban on specified BSE-free herds, to bringing the Province in line with the rest of the country on "de-rating" village shops — were also important developments.

However, he denied that the Unionist vote had effectively been "bought" by the Government.

"I don't see these positive things as buying us. I regard them as things that ought to have happened anyway."



Support for Ben Chapman, the Wirral South Labour candidate, from his daughter Bridget, during yesterday's by-election

## Tebbit lambasts 'tacky' Heseltine

BY POLLY NEWTON, POLITICAL REPORTER

**MICHAEL HESELTINE** has been accused by his former Cabinet colleague Lord Tebbit of conduct that is "tasteless, tacky if not dishonourable, and self-centered beyond even the call of his profession".

In a withering attack on the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Tebbit, once Tory party chairman, cites as an example the way Mr Heseltine tried to avoid National Service. He writes in a review of a new

Heseltine biography: "It is hard totally to condemn anyone knowing that National Service was coming to an end for seeking to escape completely. Having tried and failed to do that, to go on to escape from the Army by standing for Parliament in a hopelessly safe Labour seat is a more dubious, but still forgivable, ploy."

"But it jars the nerves that after just 61 days' service as a second lieutenant Heseltine

wears his Guards tie as though he had served his regiment, not legally deserted it."

Mr Heseltine began his National Service in January 1959, when 25. A month after arriving, he was selected as Conservative candidate for the safe Labour seat of Gower in South Wales. In September 1959, when the election was called, he was allowed to resign from the Army under rules which prevented parla-

mentary candidates from remaining in military service.

He had completed a third of the expected period of National Service and spent 61 days with the Welsh Guards.

Three years later the rules were changed after a rash of applications by servicemen to stand for Parliament.

Lord Tebbit says in a review in *The Spectator* of Michael Crick's biography, *Michael*. Continued on page 2, col 4

Law comes  
into play  
as judge  
overrules  
rugby ban

By FRANCIS GIBB  
AND MICHAEL HORNSHILL

A RUGBY union star who challenged his suspension from the game yesterday won a High Court ruling that opens the way to similar actions against sporting bodies whose decisions affect players' livelihoods.

Mark Jones, a Welsh player who was sent off for fighting during a game against Swansea, won a ruling that he should not be suspended for four weeks pending his appeal.

In a decision which lawyers said marked the new professional climate of the game, Mrs Justice Ebsworth granted an injunction allowing Jones back on the field until an appeal over a disciplinary committee's decision is heard.

Jones, Ebbw Vale's No 8, said that his four-week suspension by the Welsh Rugby Union's disciplinary committee was unfair because he did not have a sufficient chance to put his side of the case.

The player is paid £29,000 a year, can earn bonuses of £10,000 for winning key games, and was "a vital member of the side". He can now continue playing until an appeal is completed, whether by an internal hearing or — if that fails — at a full High Court trial.

Mrs Justice Ebsworth said that sporting decisions had for years been made from "wet and windy" touchlines. But the new professional game meant that those decisions now affected "many people who earn a living".

She said it was "naïve" to contend — as it had been until recently — that the decisions of disciplinary committees could not be challenged, because the sanctions imposed now had "economic results" on those affected. The judge said that the lawyer representing Jones

Continued on page 2, col 5

Santos joins the  
cloning debate

The President of the European Commission has asked his officials to investigate whether there was a need for joint action by EU states to regulate genetics in the light of the successful cloning of a sheep carried out by British scientists. Jacques Santos has asked experts to produce a report on the ethical questions that arose.

Mr Santos was dismissive

The Queen  
goes into  
cyberspace

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE QUEEN, who prides herself on being a thoroughly modern monarch, is about to make one of the great technological leaps of her reign by having her own web site on the Internet.

From next Thursday, 35 million computer users around the world who are plugged into the global information network will be able to access 150 pages of royal facts, from the monarch's date of birth to the opening times of Buckingham Palace.

A Palace spokeswoman said yesterday: "We don't sit here with quill pens, you know; we are already highly computerised. The Internet can play a very important part in our public information role." The site's address being kept secret until the Queen inaugurates the service next week at



Kingsbury School, Brent, north London.

Callers at the site will be able to find copious notes on royal history, finances, biographies of current family members and much more.

But there will be no items of gossip or personal information, such as whether the Queen's new television racing service has brought her more winners or where the Duchess of York will be taking her next foreign holiday.

## Diane Blood wins right to have dead husband's baby

By EMMA WILKINS

DIANE BLOOD was celebrating with champagne yesterday after winning the right to take her late husband's sperm abroad for fertility treatment.

Mrs Blood, who had been fighting for the right to bear her husband Stephen's child for two years, said she was relieved, elated and jubilant.

Her celebrations came after the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, which last year banned her from treatment in Britain and abroad, decided to make an exception in her case. The Authority ruled that Mrs Blood may export Stephen's sperm provided she attends a fertility clinic in Brussels for treatment.

Mrs Blood, 30, said: "It's wonderful news and I still can't quite believe it. I'm sure hospitality, he described as the pinnacle of his three-day visit to Britain.

When he squeezed into the cockpit of a Red Arrows Hawk trainer, his smile was that of a boy with a new toy — how to be small but very good.

There are, however, important differences. The RAF now has women flying combat aircraft and last year selected six more for pilot training. During his command of the Israeli Air Force, Mr Weizman resisted every pressure to put women in the cockpit. Last year, for the first time, the Israelis

Stephen would be very proud and happy."

The legal battle, which took Mrs Blood to the High Court in London and The Court of Appeal, had been arduous but worthwhile, she said.

Mrs Blood's campaign began three years ago when Stephen contracted bacterial meningitis and fell into a coma in February 1995. He died before he could sign a consent form vital under HFEA rules regulating fertility treatment.

The Court of Appeal ruled three weeks ago that the Authority was wrong not to take proper account of European law, which gives every European citizen the right to receive medical services in another member state unless there are overriding public policy reasons against it.

Photograph, page 22

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Sacked Clinton aide spills beans

The disclosures about President Clinton's eagerness to reward big campaign contributors with overnight stays in the Lincoln bedroom and other White House perks came from Harold Ickes, the President's former deputy chief of staff, who was dismissed last year.

Page 12

By ALAN HAMILTON

EVEN IF you are a 72-year-old head of state, once bitten by the flying bug, you cannot leave planes alone, and especially if you helped to found and once commanded your country's air force.

President Weizman of Israel joined the RAF in Egypt in 1942. Yesterday he returned to RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire as a guest which, without intending any slight to the Queen's

hospitality, he described as the pinnacle of his three-day visit to Britain. When he squeezed into the cockpit of a Red Arrows Hawk trainer, his smile was that of a boy with a new toy — how to be small but very good.

Asked what he thought of the

present-day RAF, Mr Weizman said: "I saw the performances in the Gulf: they are excellent. It is a problem for both the RAF and the Israeli Air Force — how to be small but very good." There are, however, important differences. The RAF now has women flying combat aircraft and last year selected six more for pilot training. During his command of the Israeli Air Force, Mr Weizman resisted every pressure to put women in the cockpit. Last year, for the first time, the Israelis

accepted six for pilot training. All of them failed.

Clearly, for Mr Weizman, flying is a man's occupation. During his visit to Cranwell yesterday he reminisced with senior officers about his RAF days, but he did not mention that, when courting Reuma, his London-born wife, he supposedly flew his Spitfire over her tennis court and bombarded it with red roses.

Dogfight renewed, page 3

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## Mr Ashdown winks and everything falls into place again

**I**s Michael Brown (C. Brigg & Cleethorpes) losing his bone? Once in tune with the splendidly robust mood of today's Tory party, Mr Brown has gone all wishy-washy and sentimental. Hard-nosed Home Secretary Michael Howard heard Brown complain to the PM yesterday about "stowaways who have been arriving, unfortunately, dead, in small ships, at Felixstowe". They had travelled "in dreadful conditions. Though they are illegal immigrants they are

arriving, as I say, dead, and something ought to be done about it."

"Unfortunately" dead, Mr Brown? Illegal immigrants unfortunately dead? Get a grip on yourself, man. Have a drink with Michael Howard. He'll sort you out.

To miss the key to Prime Minister's Questions yesterday was to miss all like someone with a coded message but no code. And if your attention had slipped, you would have missed it. It lasted half a second

To that key in a moment. First let us set the scene. The Opposition were indignant about Gulf War syndrome, the alleged ministry cover-up, and medical provision for British troops. Neil Gerrard (Lab, Walthamstow) was first. Why were Tory ministers refusing to take personal responsibility for mistakes over organophosphates? People had died. Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, was (was he not?) "without honour". Opposition backbenchers howled their agreement. Strong stuff. Tony



POLITICAL SKETCH

Blair opened up a second front of moral outrage. A Defence Select Committee report had judged medical provision for our troops "cruelly deficient", said the Labour leader. "Which minister will take responsibility?" How could the Prime Minister delay comment or action on this? When would we have his response?

Opposition backbenchers shouted: "Answer! Answer!"

Paddy Ashdown returned to the original charge. How dare Mr Major call the Gulf War syndrome "an ailment"? Did he not realise that this was a terrible illness? At his best (as he was yesterday) the Liberal Democrat leader is most effective at communicating a cheer of support and anger.

Through all this, John Major seemed unsettled and cross. Perhaps he had early intimations of a bad result from the Wirral by-election; perhaps he felt defensive or concerned about organophosphates. Whatever it was, Mr Major was not having a good afternoon. By contrast, Mr Ashdown now reinforced an

impression, conveyed equally by Mr Blair and his backbenchers, of principled outrage. Eyes blazing, he saluted. The cameras moved off.

Then he winked. I missed it; but two colleagues and a friend in the Gallery report the same. Paddy Ashdown winked towards Labour's Chief Whip, Donald Dewar.

A wink can say all manner of things. It can say: "Catch that skewered him". It can say: "nice pincer move" by your man and me eh? It can say



was ver  
shoot me

fire sell-o

surer jai  
olf club fr

ON



## Santer orders EU investigation into ethics of cloning

By NIGEL HAWKES AND CHARLES BRENNER

JACQUES SANTER, president of the European Commission, joined the debate over Dolly, the cloned sheep, yesterday. He asked EC officials to investigate whether there was a need for joint action by the 15 EU states to regulate genetics and asked the Commission's biotechnology advisory group of independent experts to produce a report on the "fundamental ethical questions".

Commission officials said an EU ban already existed on the cloning of humans, but until now Brussels has not tried to regulate other forms of genetic manipulation, and is not even certain it has the authority to do so.

Mr Santer said: "The Commission will be examining the whole question in the light of the results of these initiatives, to see if the Commission has any specific competence in this area."

His intervention followed a plea from MEPs on the European Parliament's environment, public health and consumer protection committee. Committee chairman Ken Collins (Stratclyde East) said: "Cloning breaks new ground, a fact which may deeply disturb and frighten many people. To answer these fears we need to ensure that the benefits of genetic manipulation technology are not lost in a tidal wave of abuse." In

London at its first meeting, a new government advisory body, the Human Genetics Advisory Commission, discussed whether the 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, which bans human cloning, is sufficiently explicit. The law was written before the new technique used to create Dolly had been devised.

Sir Colin Campbell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nottingham and chairman of the advisory commission, is to write to his opposite number at the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to confirm the adequacy of the existing law.

The 1990 Act bans cloning by the technique called nuclear transfer, in which the nucleus of an embryo is replaced by one from another cell or embryo. But the use of adult cells will not yet be contemplated.

Baroness Warnock, whose committee recommended the law, believes an amendment may be needed.

"We didn't know about cloning from adult cells, and the act probably now needs to be amended to outlaw all human cloning," she has said.

In an interview with BBC Radio, Sir Colin said: "Above all we ought to tell the truth and say where there are wonderful promises and excitement and contributions to



Michael Heseltine, left, the subject of Lord Tebbit's scathing attack yesterday

## Tebbit lambasts Heseltine

Continued from page 1  
Heseltine, that the only thing

Heseltine seems not to have wanted friends but actively used acolytes until their usefulness waned, and they were dropped."

But of Mr Crick, the biographer, he says: "He scarcely understands why someone like me set personal ambition aside to stop him. Heseltine's laser-guided system can focus on only one target at a time. He is a supremely good one-ball juggler, but a prime minister must keep a dozen or more balls in the air — and that he could do."

Lord Tebbit says Mr Heseltine was responsible for bungling privatising the Post Office and the coal industry, was "lacklustre" at the Department of the Environment, and "let the Nirvana project run out of control" when

Defence Secretary. However, he acknowledges that Mr Heseltine achieved successes, including the creation of Urban Development Corporations, the establishment of the Audit Commission and his campaign against CND. "It is a pity he was never sent to sort out social security," he adds.

Mr Heseltine was defended yesterday by Sir Nicholas Scott, the former Tory minister, who said: "Not for the first time my very good friend Norman Tebbit has gone over the top."

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Attempting to play down the attack's significance, Sir Nicholas added: "I don't think that Norman these days is regarded as being a serious player in the political field."

Mr Heseltine was making no comment.

## Major defends Soames

The Prime Minister was urged in the Commons yesterday to agree to compensation for former service personnel suffering from so-called Gulf War syndrome. John Major defended Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, in the face of Labour demands for his resignation over the manner, and told MPs that compensation could not be paid until the cause of the illnesses had been resolved. Although no Gulf War veteran has yet sued the Ministry of Defence, more than 1,200 have indicated their intention to do so.

## Princess faces tribunal

Diana, Princess of Wales, may be asked to give evidence at an industrial tribunal next week over the dismissal of the housemaid Sylvia McDermott (right). Ms McDermott, 43, who worked at Kensington Palace from 1987 until last November, is demanding reinstatement. Her lawyers said that if the Princess refused, they might serve a witness statement requiring her to attend the hearing in Croydon on Wednesday. They said: "The lawyers for Diana, Princess of Wales have conceded that the dismissal was unfair, but her request for re-employment has been refused." Ms McDermott, who earned £9,000 a year, is said to have turned down an offer of £5,500 to settle out of court.

## More support abortion

A woman's right to choose an abortion is supported by an increasing number of Britons, including half of Roman Catholics, according to a MORI poll. Growing numbers of people, however, are rejecting the idea of terminating a pregnancy on the grounds that the child would be mentally or physically handicapped. MORI began questioning 1,943 adults on the day that the ProLife Alliance party announced it would field 50 candidates at the General Election demanding an end to all abortions, except to save a life.

## We may be alone again

Two astronomers from the University of Geneva who found a planet orbiting around a distant star were mistaken, a professor has claimed. The discovery 16 months ago was the first evidence that stars other than the Sun have planets, and increased the chance of life elsewhere in the universe. But David Gray of the University of Western Ontario says in *Nature* that natural variations in the star explain "wobbles" in its image that the astronomers identified as being caused by a massive planet orbiting close to the star.

## MPs admonish aid agency

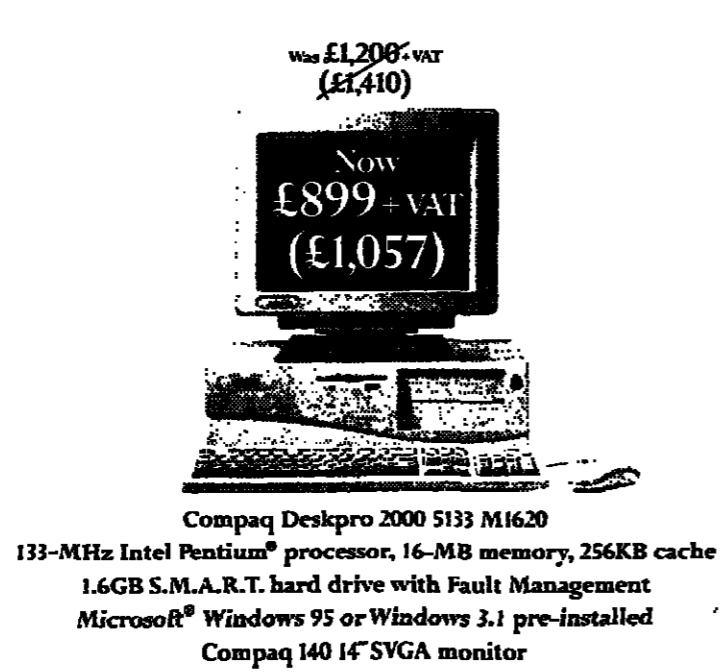
THE Overseas Development Administration was rebuked by MPs last night for failing to make adequate checks on British firms that received grants to assist overseas aid projects (Valerie Elliott writes).

Potential conflict were exposed after scrutiny of a £23.36 million grant to a

ders. The firm had given business worth £10 million to Fisons, which had provided it with a bank guarantee.

The MPs said: "We are disturbed that lessons such as these had still to be learnt by a government department with so much experience in administering aid projects."

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# RAF veteran renews dogfight with Israeli President



President Weizman, left, and in the Spitfire he was flying when he fired on RAF pilot Douglas Liquorish, pictured right in a Spitfire, after the Israeli mistook his plane for an Egyptian aircraft. Mr Liquorish said he bore no animosity

**'He was very sneaky — but he did not shoot me down as he claimed'**

DOUGLAS LIQUORISH is not sure if the RAF excluded him from their welcoming party for Ezer Weizman yesterday in case the two might have carried on their scrap from nearly 50 years ago.

Their clash in a dogfight over the Israeli desert in 1949 and have never met since which disappoints 72-year-old Mr Liquorish as he wishes the President of Israel to know he bears him no animosity for crippling his Tempest fighter plane and giving him the fight of his life.

Britain was at peace on January 7, 1949, the day of an agreed ceasefire between Egypt and Israel, when four RAF Spitfires were ordered to patrol the disputed border to monitor troop movements and protect British military bases in Egypt. All four were shot down by Israeli ground fire or

its Spitfires; one pilot was dead and three were still missing when Mr Liquorish and the others of 6 Squadron were scrambled from their base at Doverso in the early afternoon.

"We didn't even know what the mission was when we took off, but once in the air it was made clear London was going mad about losing four planes in a day when we weren't supposed to be at war," Mr Liquorish said. The RAF pilots came up behind four Spitfires which they presumed were British.

"One of our squadron was killed instantly and I saw his aircraft spiralling down and a

second later I felt the bullets tearing into my plane with one ending up buried in the seat armour right behind my head. That was my first time in combat." He still has the shell and would be delighted to return it to its rightful owner.

Mr Liquorish does not take issue with President Weizman's account that the Israelis mistook them for Egyptian Spitfires, even though his Tempest was half as big again and more bulbous than a Spitfire.

"At the speeds we were going and in that confusion he obviously shot first and asked questions later. Perhaps, the Israelis were a little trigger happy," he said. All three forces flew Spitfires, "which made life a bit complicated up there".

Another survivor from that encounter, Flight Lieutenant Brian Spragg, DFC, told yesterday how he was first to retaliate, firing on Weizman, damaging his Spitfire and forcing the Israelis into swift retreat. "If my aim had been better, by about two feet to the left, President Weizman would not be a guest of Her Majesty this week," Mr Spragg said.

"He was trying to do the same to me, but with some peculiar manoeuvres I got behind him and let loose on his tail," he said with practised understatement. His account of the dogfight in his pilot's log simply reports "had a

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## Spitfire sell-off challenged

THE sale of a salvaged Spitfire to an American collector has been challenged.

Arthur Woolass, 69, a retired salvage engineer, says that he is prepared to go to court to prove he is the owner of the aircraft that was sold for £73,000 by two restoration enthusiasts at Sotheby's last November. He said yesterday: "I'm not interested in any money. All I want is justice."

That plane belongs to me." The Spitfire crashed into mudflats on the Humber near Mr Woolass's home in Swineshead, North Lincolnshire, on September 9, 1944.

He says that his salvage claim was accepted by the Air Ministry in 1960. But in 1983 Stephen Arnold and Julian Mitchell, the eventual sellers, dug it out of the mud and started a 13-year restoration

project at their homes in Kidlington, Oxfordshire.

John Foster, Mr Woolass's solicitor, said: "Because of the age of Mr Woolass's claim the salvage work was probably undertaken in complete ignorance that he had previously been given permission."

Mr Woolass said: "I was shocked when I heard it had been sold. I never even knew it had been recovered."

## Treasurer jailed for golf club fraud

BY PAUL WILKINSON

THE treasurer of one of the country's oldest golf clubs has been jailed after he embezzled more than £120,000 earmarked for improvements to the green and clubhouse.

Alan Craddock, 46, a former senior official with Barclays Bank, earned £25,000 a year but ran two cars, one a high-powered Saab with a personalised numberplate.

Yesterday as he started a 2½-year sentence, his former club colleagues were trying to get him banned from every club in the county. Craddock admitted stealing £123,000 from the Bishop Auckland Golf Club in Co Durham when he appeared at the city's Crown Court.

Officials of the club, which was founded in 1894, thought the money was safe in an account at the branch where

Craddock had worked but when they approached the bank to discuss the project, they were told that they would need an overdraft.

Glyn Thacker, the club secretary, said: "Lots of people feel very bitter. We've taken out a loan for £123,000 and will have to pay it back over 15 years. We should not have had to do that."

In 1991 Craddock started running short of cash and set up a secret second account and paid funds into it. He then forged documents to make it look like the real account was full.

Craddock, who was later made redundant, vanished last November when the deception was discovered. He booked into a hotel in York and wrote 18 suicide letters to friends and family but police traced him the next day.

## Ex-college head is asked about missing artworks

BY PAUL WILKINSON

THE former principal of a university college is to be questioned over missing works of art and furniture.

Duane Arnold resigned last month as head of St Chad's College at Durham after details of his qualifications listed in 'Who's Who' and other reference directories proved to be false. He blamed clerical errors and a plot against him by academics who disapproved of his radical methods.

Last year the 280 students of St Chad's passed three motions censuring his management style and expressing no confidence in him as their principal.

Since his return to America in December with his wife Jane, a part-time development director for the university, it has emerged that a number of items cannot be found.

After taking over in 1994 as

tempting to convert the entrance hall of his lodgings near the Norman Cathedral into a replica of the Oval Office in the White House.

During the alterations several pieces of furniture, paintings and ornaments were put in store. Among the pieces college officials have been unable to trace and which may still be in storage are an 18th-century chest of drawers, an oil painting and about a dozen objets d'art.

The officials are attempting to contact Dr Arnold through his English solicitors to see if he can shed any light on their whereabouts.

The college authorities contacted Durham police over the matter but were told its officers could not start an investigation before the college had carried out a thorough check and had contacted Dr Arnold to see if he could help to trace the missing items.

## Two win Hoover damages

BY ADAM FRESCO

TWO customers who lost out in the Hoover free flights fiasco were awarded damages yesterday in a move that could lead to thousands of other claims against the company.

District Judge Bennett ruled that Hoover abused a get-out clause when it refused to issue tickets to America in the 1994 promotion, stating there could be only "one application per household".

The firm said separate applications from the same address invalidated the claims but Judge Bennett, at St Helen's County Court, said the clause should not have cancelled out all rights to free tickets but restricted Hoover's obligation to provide two free tickets to the address.

He awarded £461 compensation to Peter Lucas from Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, and £466 to Norman Magowan, of Belfast.

A SOLICITOR who became suspicious that his teenage son had been involved in the murder of one homosexual and an attack on another forced him to confess his role, a court was told yesterday.

Michael Bowes, senior solicitor with Plymouth council, said he first began worrying about his son, Richard, when he realised he had done a load of washing in the middle of the night and did not get up to go to college. He had heard about the killing of Frederick Sweet, 64, and the attack on Bernard Hawken, 53, in Central Park, Plymouth, on the news and had slowly come to realise that his son was involved.

Richard Bowes, 18, Roberto Pace, 18, and Stuart Smith, 19, all of Plymouth, deny murdering Mr Sweet, attempting to murder Mr Hawken and causing him grievous bodily harm with intent.

The jury at Exeter Crown Court has been told that the two men were attacked separately on November 6 last year. Mr Sweet was killed by being kicked, punched and stamped on. Mr Hawken survived a similar attack but is still too ill to testify.

Mr Bowes did not give evidence in person but his statement was read to the jury. He said he had confronted his son, who said he knew nothing about the attacks. Later, he had tackled him again. "I said to Richard, 'You were involved weren't you?' and he replied that he had thrown a punch but had not been involved in the beating. He said he had tried to stop it...".

Richard Bowes, 18, Roberto Pace, 18, and Stuart Smith, 19, all of Plymouth, deny murdering Mr Sweet, attempting to murder Mr Hawken and causing him

The case continues.

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NIVEA

Home Secretary heads for confrontation with judges and lawyers over proposals for swifter justice

## Howard sets out plans to curb right to trial by jury

BY RICHARD FORD  
AND FRANCES GIBB

MICHAEL HOWARD yesterday embarked on another confrontation with the legal profession by proposing curbs on the right to trial by jury and other substantial changes to the criminal justice system.

Thousands of offenders, including burglars and some sex offenders, would be likely to receive lighter sentences as a result of proposals for more cases to be dealt with by magistrates rather than the Crown Court. Seventeen-year-olds would be dealt with in adult rather than the youth courts and the Crown Prosecution Service would lose its power to discontinue cases on grounds that it would not be in public interest to prosecute.

A defendant pleading guilty could get free advice from a duty solicitor at court in the hope that they would be dealt with the day after being charged. Anyone seeking a delay because they could not get their own lawyer would be forced to use the duty solicitor. Mr Howard published 33 detailed proposals in a report by a civil servant, saying that they would speed up the process of justice and reduce costs by £55 million. Fourteen of the measures would require legislation and all must now go out to consultation.

The Conservatives cannot introduce the proposals before the general election. If Labour



Howard: quicker justice

- Automatic right to elect jury trial withdrawn in range of cases, including assault, causing actual bodily harm, many indecency charges, theft and burglaries.
- Offenders aged 17 to be dealt with by adult rather than youth courts.
- CPS loses right to discontinue cases on public-interest grounds.
- CPS staff to work from police stations to deal quickly with guilty pleas.
- Stipendiary magistrates to sit alone in youth courts, particularly in complex cases.
- Lay staff in CPS offices should be able to review case files, and non-lawyers employed by CPS should present uncontested cases in magistrates' courts.
- Clerks to justices to manage pretrial preparation of all cases.
- Youth court should administer cautions when an offence is admitted.

wins the general election it would not proceed with the curbs on jury trial.

The Home Secretary admitted that the proposal to curb the automatic right to jury trial for certain offences was "especially sensitive". In a statement to the Commons he added: "Jury trial is a central feature of our system of justice and one to which the Government is entirely committed. We would not wish to restrict

it without very careful thought."

Too many petty cases were heard at Crown Court, he said, adding that defendants with good reason for a jury trial, including those defending an unblemished reputation, would be able to appeal to magistrates.

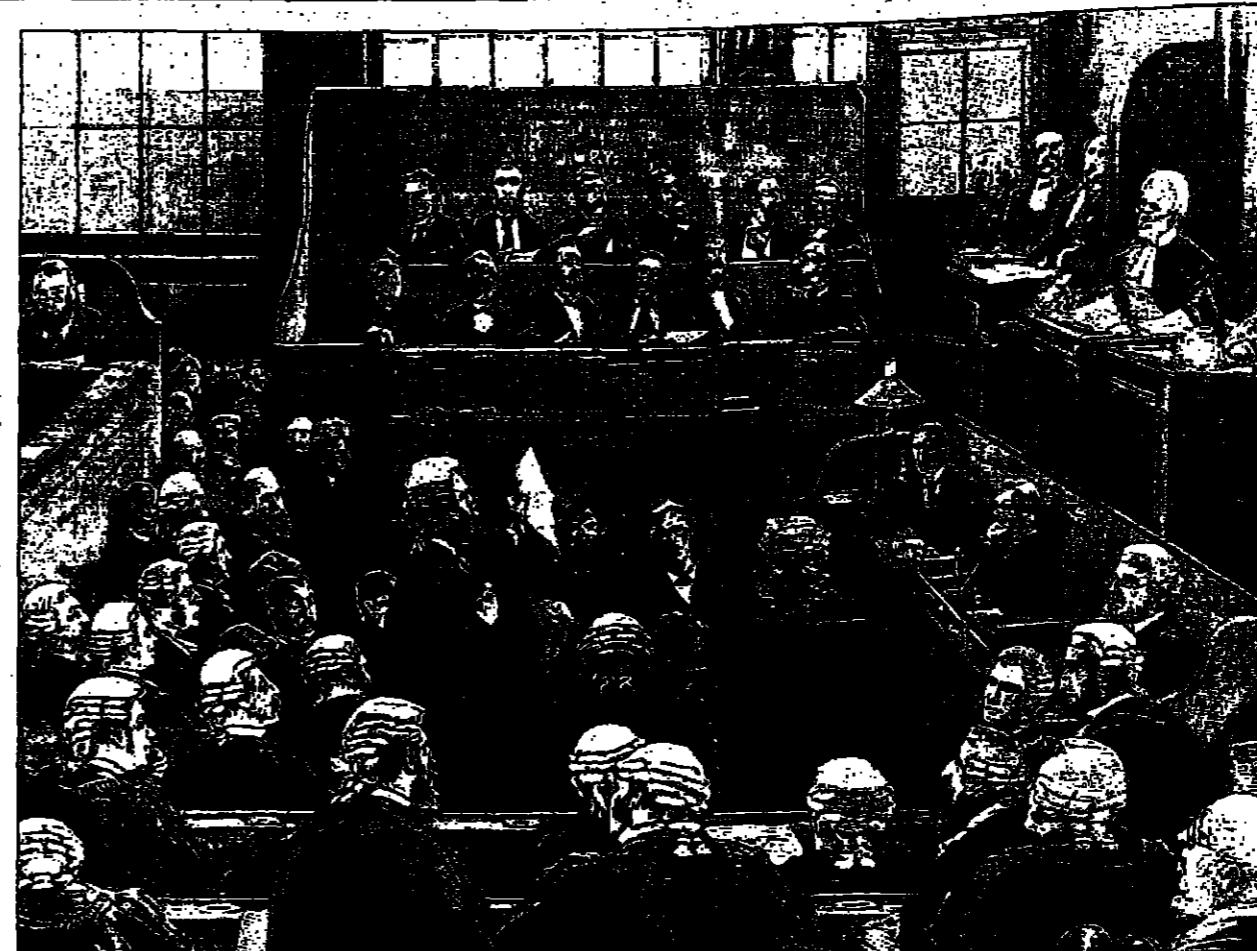
Removing the automatic right to jury trial in cases such as theft, handling stolen goods and some sexual offences

would result in 18,000 cases being heard by magistrates rather than in Crown Court, the report estimates. It could also lead to lighter sentences; the average jail term served by a magistrates' court is 2.8 months compared with 22 months in the Crown Court.

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, told the Commons that Labour welcomed many of the recommendations, particularly reducing the age of adulthood in the courts from 18 to 17. But, he said, any erosion of the right to jury trials would be wrong. "If a police officer or an MP or even the Secretary of State was charged with an offence of dishonesty, would they not insist on being tried by a jury?" he asked. "If that is the case, why should others be denied this right of election?"

Some senior judges have strong reservations about any erosion of trial by jury and over proposals to strengthen the role of the Crown Prosecution Service in police stations.

Magistrates welcomed



A jury at the Central Criminal Court as depicted more than a century ago. The system goes back to Magna Carta

many of the proposals to reduce delays but said that rather than the right to elect jury trial being curbed, they favoured offences being reclassified so that some could be tried only by magistrates. The Magistrates' Association also attacked the proposal that justices' clerks or court clerks should decide matters such as the trial venue.

The Bar Council condemned the proposal on jury trial. Robert Owen, QC, the Bar chairman, said the proposals would have to be carefully considered, but that "we do not believe that the interests of justice should ever be subordinated to the demands of administrative convenience". The proposal to remove the right of defendants to elect for trial by jury would mean thousands of people losing the right to be tried by an ordinary

jury of men and women, he added.

The Crown Court was "delivering justice daily in thousands of cases which attract no publicity at all – and it is doing it as swiftly as is consistent with doing justice to accuser and accused alike". It would also compound delays in magistrates' courts.

The Law Society strongly opposed the proposal, questioning the need for the Government to consider changing "such a fundamental right when it affects only a relatively small number of cases".

The right of defendants to opt for jury trial only results in a jury trial in about one in 200 cases. Of the cases committed to the Crown Court, only one in four reach there because of the defendant's choice. Robert Roscoe, of the society's criminal law committee, said that the interests of bureaucracy should not come before the interests of justice.

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# Leading universities lose £12m in grant to under-performers

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

LEADING universities will have to forfeit £12 million in grant to reduce cuts at less successful institutions, the Higher Education Funding Council said yesterday.

Overall funding for the 137 universities and colleges of higher education will rise by 2.8 per cent to £3.4 billion next year, roughly in line with inflation. But the council acted to prevent big losses at some universities, as grants were reassessed according to changes in their research ratings in the four-yearly review last December.

That was achieved by capping the increases awarded to the best-performing establishments: nearly £1.7 million was taken from University College London, £1 million from Oxford and £542,000 from Imperial College, London. Of that, more than £1.7 million was redistributed to Manchester, a similar amount to Exeter and £800,000 to Aston, although all three remained among the

biggest year-on-year losers.

Peter North, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, said: "The need for the cap means that the selectivity policy is not working fully. It points to the need for better funding overall in higher education and for that we are all pinning our hopes on Sir Ron Dearing." Sir Ron is chairing the Government's review of higher education, which reports in the summer.

Professor Martin Harris, Vice-Chancellor of Manchester, blamed its reduced funding on the drop in research ratings for its medical school. Without the subsidy from other universities, the jobs of trainee doctors in Manchester's hospitals would be at risk, he said.

The biggest annual gains went to Cranfield University (£10.3 per cent), UCL (9.5 per cent), York (7.7 per cent), Oxford (7.5 per cent), and Imperial College, London (7.4 per cent). Cambridge, which went down 7 per cent last year, gained 4 per cent this year.

There will be funding for 747,000 university and higher education college places in 1998-97, the same as last year.

A report by a literacy task force, chaired by Michael

## Blunkett to enlist parents in reading revolution

By JOHN O'LEARY  
EDUCATION EDITOR

PARENTS should spend 20 minutes a night reading with their children, Labour said yesterday at the launch of a "crusade" to raise levels of literacy over the course of two parliaments.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education and Employment Secretary, promised a "reading resolution". An hour a day would be devoted to "fast-paced, whole-class teaching" of reading and teachers would be retrained. A Labour government would declare 1998-99 a National Year of Reading.

The drive to give literacy priority in primary schools would be likely to lead to a wholesale revision of the national curriculum. Mr Blunkett said he would not drop entire subjects but wanted to create "elbow room" when the curriculum was revised in 2000.

Labour's plans, some of which mirror government policies, aim to ensure that by 2001, 80 per cent of 11-year-olds reach their expected



Book time yesterday at Grafton Primary School, Holloway, north London. Labour would set a 60-minute minimum.

reading standard. By 2006, all children would be expected to reach this level. Pupils who topped expectations would join older classes, and reading recovery schemes would help those who lagged behind.

Parents would be encouraged to play their part by reading to their children or hearing them read for 20 minutes a night, ten minutes

less than John Patten recommended as Education Secretary in 1994. This time would count towards Labour's recommendation of 30 minutes' homework each evening.

Trainee teachers would spend twice as long as at present learning how to teach children to read, while existing primary school teachers would embark on a "national programme of upskilling".

The Government responded by accusing Labour of stealing its policies. Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, said: "The work is already being done — through Conservative policies that Labour has opposed. Labour in power has shown little regard for literacy, as its record in local government shows." Unions broadly welcomed the proposals.

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Royal Academy plays down controversy over exhibition with blood-filled head and Hindley portrait

## Art's shock troops storm the bastion of tradition

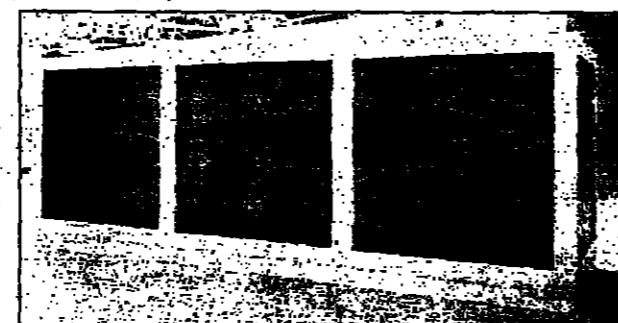
By DALYA ALBERGE  
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A SCULPTURE incorporating nine pints of an artist's blood, a gory image of dismembered limbs and a portrait of the Moors murderer Myra Hindley are to go on show at the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

The works by Marc Quinn, the Chapman brothers and Marcus Harvey respectively will be lent by the advertising millionaire Charles Saatchi, who has changed the course of British contemporary art by exhibiting such works at his north London gallery.

For Royal Academicians who fiercely guard the Academy's reputation as a bastion of tradition, and who were dismayed by attempts to revolutionise the Summer Exhibition with avant-garde works, news of a show devoted to such art came as a shock.

The RA was yesterday playing down the controversy, although the very title of the show, *Sensation*, indicates



Damien Hirst's tiger shark will be among exhibits

that it is prepared for criticism.

Norman Rosenthal, exhibitions secretary, argued that such works were as shocking, difficult and thought-provoking as Goya's *Disasters of War* and Picasso's *Guernica* were in their day. "Art is good when it perplexes us," he said.

The Academy says that apart from reaching new audiences with a central location, showing the works in a new setting and in different juxtapositions will transform them.

### Market keeps a weather eye on master patron

By DALYA ALBERGE

CHARLES SAATCHI has become Britain's most influential collector of contemporary art. Such is his standing as a patron, he can make or break an artist and his activities are seen as a barometer of the market.

He has such a passion for art that he buys in bulk when he finds an artist he loves. He has been known to snap up as many as 20 works in one go, trusting his eye and relying on gut feeling rather than any professional adviser.

His insatiable appetite was first whetted by a Sotheby's drawing he bought in 1970 for £100. In the decades since then, he has introduced British audiences to artists such as Jeff Koons, master of kitsch, Robert Gober, a specialist in conceptual works inspired by Duchamp, and Donald Judd, a minimalist for his presentation of preserved animals, is one of his most famous home-grown discoveries, although Mr Saatchi claims not to have strong



Saatchi buys in bulk and relies on gut feeling

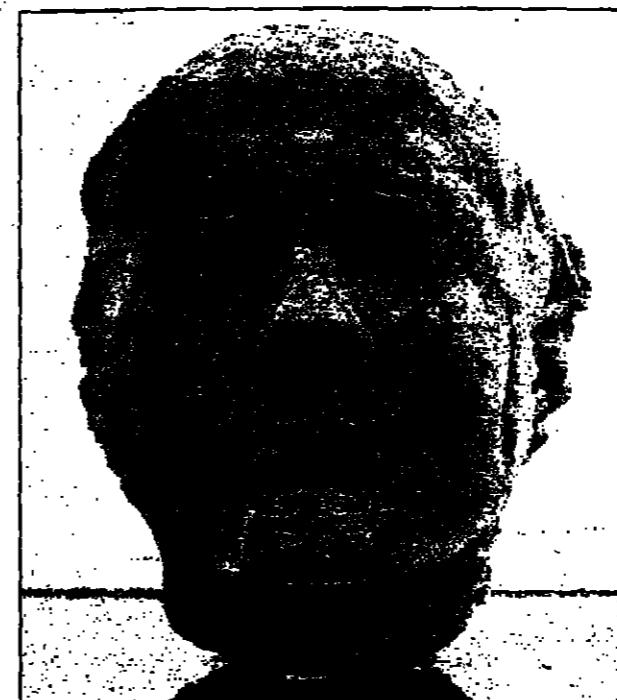
Leading article, page 19

Another exhibit will be the preserved tiger shark by Damien Hirst, who has upset animal rights campaigners by pickling sheep and cows.

The 30 artists to be featured have been hailed as leading lights of their generation, part of an "explosion of creativity" in the visual arts that has not been seen since the emergence of Pop Art in the 1960s.

However, Peter Coker, a Royal Academician who was considered a wild figure in the 1950s with his "kitchen sink" paintings, said: "It's very much against the RA going down that path. This has put me off my lunch. It's ghastly. I might be criticised for being old-fashioned and backward, but how far forward can you look I don't know. I've become a sheer cynic about these things. I've never seen a Damien Hirst work and I don't want to. I can see a dead sheep in my butcher's."

Michael Reynolds, a member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, said: "It's about three quarters of a



Marc Quinn used his own blood for *Self*, left. Marcus Harvey created *Myra* from children's handprints

century since a lavatory pan was first shown by Duchamp as a work of art. That was the last revolution. These artists are getting on a 70-year-old bandwagon. This is the new establishment throttling anything new that might be coming up," David Lee, editor

of *Art Review*, said: "I can't believe it. This is another endorsement for Saatchi. It increases the value of his holdings, ready for when he wants to offload them. Why should they monopolise a space which has hitherto been dedicated to a different kind of

art? They already monopolise all the publicly funded spaces in London."

However, others were more receptive. Leonard Rosoman, RA, said: "The RA should represent a kind of cross-section of what is going on in London. From that point of

view I'm all for it. People should realise the Academy is no longer just representing one form of painting or sculpture. But it'll upset the traditionalists. It's important that people are upset."

The show runs from September 18 to December 28.

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Poll offers Major small comfort as Labour stays ahead on most key issues

## Ray of economic sunlight brightens Tory outlook

By PETER RIDDELL

**A** THE Tories are persuading more people that they have the best policies for managing the economy, but are lagging well behind Labour on other important issues for the general election, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

The poll, undertaken last weekend, will reinforce Tory claims that they are winning back support on the economy.

Among those saying that managing the economy will be very important in helping to decide their vote, 44 per cent say the Tories have the best policies, and 29 per cent Labour. At the end of last March, 34 per cent said Labour, and 31 per cent the Tories.

This change, coupled with the improvement in economic optimism, is the most positive news for the Tories. Among

the public as a whole, the Tory and Labour ratings on managing the economy are almost the same as in 1992.

However, this has been offset by dissatisfaction with the Government's record and a time-for-a-change mood. Moreover, not only is John Major's personal rating less favourable than his was in 1983 or Margaret Thatcher's was in 1983 and 1987, but Tony Blair's rating is far better than those of his predecessors.

Labour is just ahead of the Tories on having the best policies on taxation. This is a big change compared with five years ago, largely because the number saying the Tories have the best policies has fallen sharply. This has resulted in an increasing number of don't knows rather than a rise

in the proportion that Labour has the best policies on taxation.

Of the 14 key issues, Labour is ahead on eight. The Tories on five and the Liberal Democrats on one. Moreover, Labour is a very long way in the lead on the three issues rated as most important, healthcare, education and unemployment.

The two parties are level-peggng on law and order, a big improvement for Labour since 1992, while the Tories are in the lead on the economy, Europe, Northern Ireland and defence. Labour is also ahead on other social issues such as pensions, housing, transport and trade unions.

Europe has moved slightly up the rankings of the most important issues, from tenth

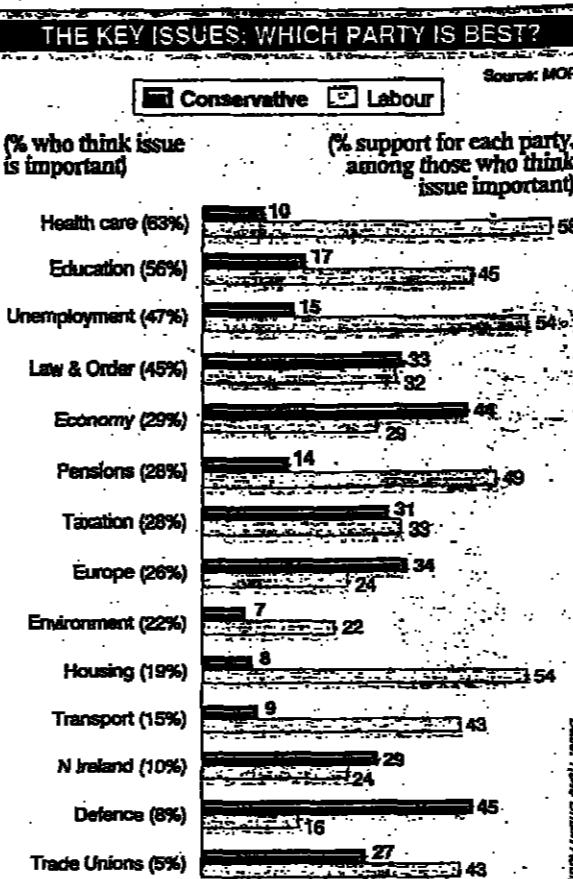
to eighth over the past year, among the public as a whole. For Tory loyalists, however, it is the fourth most important, behind health, law and order, and education. But it is only seventh among those who have switched away from the Tories since 1992 and whom the party is trying to win back.

Of those regarding the issue as important, the number regarding the Tories as having the best policies has risen from 31 to 34 per cent over the period. Overall, 63 per cent of Tory loyalists believe that the party has the best policies on Europe, compared with only 18 per cent of those who have deserted the Tories since 1992.

Europe is also important for Liberal Democrat supporters. Some 15 per cent believe that the Tories have the best policies on Europe. The issue is of

well above average importance in Tory/Liberal Democrat marginal seats. This suggests that the Tories should emphasise Europe in those parts of the country, such as the South West, where they face a strong Liberal Democratic challenge, since its supporters are more Eurosceptic than the leadership's pro-European stance. The best issue for the Liberal Democrats is protecting the environment, on which they are rated just ahead of Labour.

These findings on which



issues are very important in deciding how people will vote differ from the answers to the question asked by MORI every month about which are the most important issues facing Britain today. While the number of people regarding Europe as among the most important issues facing Britain today has risen from 29 to 35 per cent over the past month, and is now ranked fourth in importance, it is mentioned by just 26 per cent as being very important for the election and is eighth ranking.

The latest poll also suggests that the Labour campaign to highlight BSE in the failed motion of censure on Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, ten days ago has made no impact. The number mentioning BSE as among the most important issue today remains at 2 per cent, as it has since last autumn.

MORI interviewed 1,940 adults face to face from February 21 to 24.

## Why Soames is right to reject resignation call

**N**icholas Soames is right not to resign as Armed Forces Minister. The demands for him to do so reflect a complete misunderstanding of ministerial responsibility. Of course, there are circumstances in which a minister should resign, but, as the Public Service Committee argued in its report last summer on *Ministerial Accountability and Responsibility*, "Proper and rigorous scrutiny and accountability may be more important in Parliament's ability to correct error than forcing resignations."

The revised version of *Questions of Procedure for Ministers* states that "ministers must not knowingly mislead Parliament and the public and must correct any inadvertent errors at the earliest opportunity". This is also included in a resolution of accountability which the Public Service Committee has proposed and which, after amendment, the Government has said it will bring to the Commons before the dissolution.

These are the yardsticks by which Mr Soames should be judged. Something very serious has obviously gone wrong at the Ministry of Defence over the use of toxic pesticides during the Gulf war. When Mr Soames learnt last September that he had been misled by officials, he informed the Defence Committee of the true position and in December apologised to the Commons for unwittingly misleading it in a series of answers. There is no reason why Mr Soames should be blamed for the actions of officials which are now, quite properly, being examined in a disciplinary inquiry.

**T**he Defence Committee should be informed of the results. The main question for Mr Soames is whether he could or should have taken earlier action to find out what had happened. This is likely to be discussed in the Defence Committee report.

However, to demand the immediate resignation of Mr Soames — as David Clark, the Shadow Defence Secretary, has done — is unjustified. Mr Clark has been indulging in the gesture politics of opposition, not behaving as an aspiring minister who hopes to become Defence Secretary nine weeks today.

PETER RIDDELL

## Labour councils chief warns of big tax rise

By JILL SHERMAN

COUNCIL tax bills could rise sharply under a Labour government, one of the party's most senior councillors said yesterday.

Sir Jeremy Beecham, who takes over as chairman of the newly merged Local Government Association from April, also gave warning of tensions between Tony Blair and local authorities if Labour exerts too much central control.

In an interview in yesterday's *New Statesman*, Sir



Beecham: local control

Jeremy, former leader of Newcastle City Council, said that he would be seeking a much greater degree of local autonomy under a Labour government. "I think at least 50 per cent of council spending should be raised locally. If an authority can demonstrate it is acting responsibly it will be able to carry its local population. That's what local democracy should be about. You simply can't have local democracy with spending levels set by central government."

He went on: "If I was Tony

## Redwood books his place in election campaign limelight

By ANDREW PIERCE

THE former Cabinet minister John Redwood is publishing an analysis next month that will stimulate the Europe debate in the Tory party on the eve of the general election.

Mr Redwood, who has finalised plans for a tour of the country during the election campaign, will argue in his 80,000-word book that the only way the single currency can work is by judging the Maastricht convergence criteria.

He will use *Our Current: Our Country*, published by Penguin, to launch his high-profile election campaign, organised independently of Conservative Central Office, in which he will speak in 30 constituencies.

The Conservative 2000 Foundation has printed hundreds of leaflets listing ten objections to the single currency. Mr Redwood will distribute them during the campaign, underlining his outright opposition to the single currency that will qualify by January 1, 1999.

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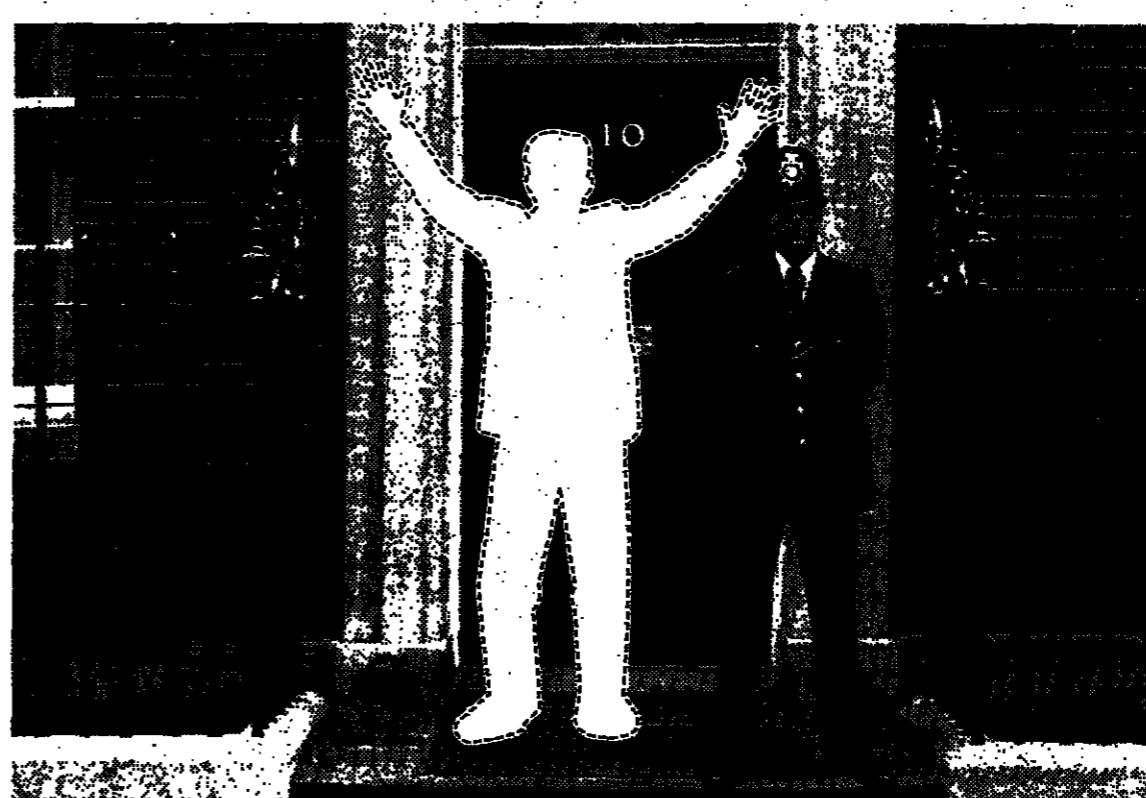
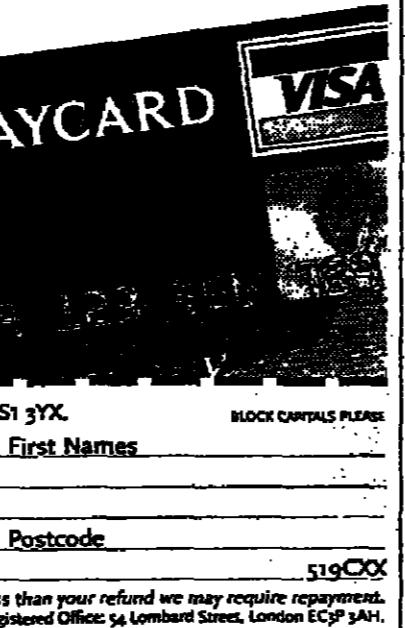
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## Scrawled note speaks volumes about White House finance scandal

FROM TOM RHODES  
IN WASHINGTON

WITH a single flourish of his presidential pen, Bill Clinton has transformed a hazy story of shady characters and Asian money into a fundraising scandal that every American can understand.

The scrawled approval for the use of the Lincoln bedroom and other White House attractions to raise funds for his re-election has placed the President firmly at the heart of an operation that even his closest defenders find difficult to justify. George Stephanopoulos, the former Clinton aide, is just one who has swiftly acknowledged the damage of

these latest disclosures which he says will cause "a lot of trouble over this year for the President".

Firm critics are more forthright. "The Lincoln bedroom is a national treasure. This is going to lead to more outrage at the system," said Jennifer Larson of the grassroots lobby group, Common Cause.

An early poll published yesterday by USA Today indicated that the public is deeply cynical in its assumption that politicians from both parties are corrupt and that money is the inevitable vehicle for access to the system. Mr Clinton's

personal involvement is likely to erode his current approval rating of 60 per cent, the highest since he has been in office.

But there is a deeper legal strand to the case which has greater potential to undermine Mr Clinton's position in the Oval Office, a fact that Harold Ickes, the former deputy chief of staff, has so obviously exploited in his release of the documents. For months, the White House has denied that there was any price tag for spending the night at the White House, taking a flight on Air Force One, sipping coffee

with the President in the Map Room or for a round of golf or a jog with Mr Clinton.

In spite of the President's insistence that no one was actually promised anything in return for money, there seems no doubt that the White House was used as little more than a Democratic contributors' holiday camp in which donors such as Steven Spielberg, the film director and producer, and Barbra Streisand, the singer and actress, could write a cheque for bed and breakfast. The White House says that Mr Clinton's actions were no different from those of past presidents, both Democratic and Republican. But no chief executive since

Richard Nixon has been so closely involved in the complexities of his re-election campaign.

Mr Clinton presided over an operation that may have crossed the legal barriers which are certain to be closely examined by the Justice Department and must place even greater pressure on Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, to appoint an independent prosecutor to investigate. Under American law it is illegal to solicit campaign contributions on federal property, including the offices of the White House. The congressional inquiries into the fundraising scandal, which have become the scourge of Mr Clinton's second term, must also determine

whether American policy and influence was in some way sold to the highest bidders.

The White House insists it was

vainly rather than any wish to influence policy that drew so many to contribute to the Democratic cause in exchange for "face time" with the President. The fact remains that the Clinton campaign has already returned more than \$1 million (£613,500) in funds received from illegal sources.

The President's own national

security staff saw little difficulty in

permitting access to a number of

people with close links to the

Chinese administration, including

an arms dealer from Beijing.

## President's sacked aide spilt beans on sleepover perk

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

AS the FBI broadened its investigations into President Clinton's fundraising debacle yesterday, the most asked question in Washington was why one of his oldest allies had split the beans.

The shoal of documents disclosing Mr Clinton's eagerness to reward big campaign contributors with overnight stays in the Lincoln bedroom and other White House perks came from Harold Ickes, the President's former deputy chief of staff. Mr Ickes was dumped by Mr Clinton in the wake of last November's election, after a friendship of 25 years, at the insistence of Erskine Bowles, the new White House chief of staff.

Mr Ickes made no secret to friends and colleagues of his anger about the way he had been treated by Mr Clinton after working tirelessly for his re-election. He learnt of his dismissal from a newspaper account that said he was too liberal to work with Republicans in the President's second term. Mr Ickes felt that Mr Clinton showed less concern for him than for his bitter rival, Dick Morris, the disgraced political adviser caught with a prostitute.

The unexpected appearance now of the Ickes files, confirming how consumed the White House had been with raising money, gives rise to wide-

spread speculation that Mr Ickes has exacted his revenge by following Washington's vintage political maxim of "don't get mad, get even".

Mr Ickes, a hardboiled New York lawyer, denied any such motive. "I told The Washington Post, 'I have enormous respect and regard for him.' It had been an honour to work for him and still was — Mr Ickes has the consolation prize of organising the Group of Seven summit in Denver in June.

Nonetheless, when Mr Ickes turned over his files last week at the request of congressional investigators, he did not seek White House permission. He simply told Clinton aides and gave them copies. The aides then rushed them out, putting their spin on them, before they leaked from Capitol Hill.

Mr Ickes argued that the documents contained "flattering stuff" about money-raising but disclosed nothing improper done by Mr Clinton. "A huge amount of smoke but no fire," Mr Ickes said. As for his own role, he admitted making a bad mistake in faxing instructions on how to obtain a tax deduction to a donor who was offering a gift of \$5 million (£3 million).

While headlines continued over the "beds-for-bucks"

scheme, the FBI expanded its inquiries into the more serious issue of foreign influence in Democratic fundraising exerted by China and other Asian countries which hoped thereby to influence White House policies.

Louis Freeh, FBI Director, briefed senators on potential involvement by China, a finding that could lead to his requesting the appointment of an independent counsel. However, Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, repeated at a congressional hearing on the affair that she had not seen enough evidence to justify such an appointment.

A key figure in the investigation is Pauline Kanchanak, a big Democratic contributor who runs the private US-Thailand Business Council. She took five business figures to coffee with Mr Clinton on the day she donated \$135,000. They included the top two executives of CP Group, a Thai conglomerate that has extensive business interests in China.

A federal grand jury in Washington has begun secret hearings with evidence from Rawlein Soberano of an Asian-American business association. He said that John Huang, the Democrats' chief Asian fundraiser, had asked him to launder money illegally into the Clinton campaign.

Hillary Clinton accepts her non-music Grammy award for the recording of her book *It Takes a Village*. She joked that it was the first time a tone-deaf person had won

Britain's Eric Clapton, who won three Grammys, and Sheryl Crow at the New York awards ceremony

## Hillary Clinton and ancient Britons scoop Grammys

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

ANCIENT Brits and Americans — living and dead — did well in the 1997 Grammys, pop music's answer to the Oscars.

On a night which saw awards for the First Lady, the late Nat "King" Cole and the veteran Tony Bennett, there were prizes for The Beatles, for *Free as a Bird*, their 1996 song featuring material from the late John Lennon, and three for Eric Clapton for *Change the World*.

The oldsters' awards won respectful applause from the young things at New York's Madison Square Gardens, who clapped as if at a county cricket match.

Bryn Terfel, the Welsh baritone, landed the classical vocalist Grammy for a collection of arias. The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Waynflete Singers won in the best choral album category.

In a shameless publicity stunt, the Grammys gave a prize to Hillary Clinton for the recording she made of her book of cosy liberal orthodoxy, *It Takes a Village*.

When country singer LeAnn Rimes, 14, won the best new artist Grammy she could barely speak for her sobs.

Best single, Eric Clapton, *Change the World*; best album, Celine Dion, *Falling into You*; best male vocalist, Eric Clapton; best female vocalist, Toni Braxton, *Unbreak my Heart*; best pop collaboration, Nat Cole and his daughter Natalie, *When I fall in Love*; best pop album, Tony Bennett, *Here's to the Ladies*; best rock album, Sheryl Crow, *Sheryl Crow*; best pop group, The Beatles, *Free as a Bird*; best contemporary folk album, Bruce Springsteen, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*.

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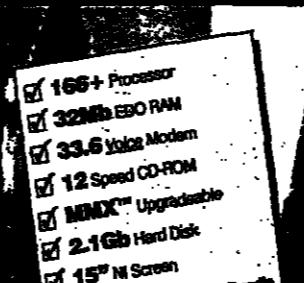
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# Dutch republican cabal breaks taboo in attack on royalty

FROM MARK FULLER IN AMSTERDAM

**THE** House of Orange, one of the most popular and placid monarchies in Europe, is facing a republican assault from a powerful group of Dutch businessmen and nobles.

Fifteen prominent Dutchmen, including a former government minister and heads of major financial institutions, have formed a secret association to promote the republican cause, breaking the country's cast-iron taboo on criticising the Royal Family, according to *De Volkskrant* newspaper. At least five of them have received honours from Queen Beatrix and one was a former member of a royal commission.

Led by Pierre Vinken, the former chairman of Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing group, the Republikeins Genootschap believes "hereditary monarchy, with a divine right [to rule] has no place in a political democracy", according to excerpts from the association's documents.

Founded last autumn, the association had intended to wait at least two years before going public, waiting until the monarchy "overestimates [its] position" and makes a fatal error".

"A republican state is the only major taboo left in the Netherlands," Mr Vinken wrote in a letter on the association's purpose. "Politicians, both on the left and right, are without exception either monarchists or dare not say they are otherwise. Against this background, it is vital the Republikeins Genootschap exists to give a clear if weak signal that will perhaps

cause younger generations to think again about the monarchy." Several of the association's members have tried to play down its purpose, saying it was "just a dining and discussion group". Three others, including Peter Korteweg, head of Robeco, Europe's biggest investment fund group, have resigned their membership.

A spokesman for the House of Orange declined detailed comment on the association, but said: "Everybody in the Netherlands has the freedom to express their opinions and to hold discussion meetings."

Nevertheless, the revelation of the association's existence and its high-profile members comes at a very sensitive time for Queen Beatrix, who is still trying to paper over the cracks caused by a recent row about her political influence.

She was accused of overstepping the constitutional mark last autumn by allegedly forcing the removal of the

Dutch Ambassador to South Africa because he was living with a woman who was not his wife. It was also widely assumed that she was behind the recent Culture Ministry decision to withdraw state subsidies from a play which criticised the Royal Family.

Under the constitution, the Queen should be even more remote from politics than the British monarch, but Queen Beatrix, 55, affectionately referred to as Trix by the public, has never hidden her strong moral views. She is opposed to homosexual marriage, which parliament wants to legalise, and regularly urges the country to be more tolerant of the disadvantaged.

During almost 17 years on the throne, she has protected the House of Orange from the public eye better than any of her European counterparts. But now the shield appears to be disintegrating, not least because of the antics of Crown Prince Willem-Alexander.

The Queen's popularity — she regularly scores 80 per cent in the polls — has been founded on a down-to-earth regal style, endearing herself to the public by being a keen cyclist and planting trees. Willem-Alexander, the first male heir to the throne in 116 years, has been involved in romantic exploits with commoners and seems to prefer fast cars, planes and speed-skating to royal duties. Together with the recent raking over of old scandals, his behaviour has reinforced republican feelings. The press has also become aggressive.



Prince Charles watches yesterday as water is collected from a pump given by ActionAid, of which he is patron

## Prince praises British aid workers during visit to Bangladeshi slum

BY GLEN OWEN

HUNDREDS of Bangladeshi slum dwellers turned out to see the Prince of Wales yesterday as he witnessed at first hand the conditions in which thousands of the country's poorest live during a visit to Tikkapara outside Dhaka.

The Prince, on the second day of a three-day visit to the country — his first — was driven down a bumpy mud and brick road to Tikkapara to see a project at the shanty town funded by ActionAid, the British charity of which he is patron.

Picking his way through the rubbish, he praised the efforts of the relief workers, saying: "I realise what an enormous problem and huge challenge it is in this part of the world".

They told him that the region's slum-dwellers often live six to a house. Their homes are usually no more than two-room huts cobbled together from bamboo straws, old plastic sheeting and rags, and act as slim protection against the floods and cyclones that frequently hit the area.

He also heard about the

efforts to improve sanitation. With up to 20 families sometimes sharing a single latrine, and limited supplies of clean, piped water, disease is widespread.

Prince Charles later visited Sylhet, a remote tea-growing area 210 miles from Dhaka, where he held a reception given by the town council: "I feel very much at home here as a result of a large number of people from Sylhet who are now residents in Britain." Officials say about 300,000 people from Sylhet have settled in Britain.

The Prince switched on a

satellite telecommunications station built by British Telecom on the town's outskirts. Nargis Islam, a Sylhet resident whose daughter lives in London, said about 90 per cent of families in Sylhet have one or more relatives living in Britain and that the station would help them to keep in contact.

Before leaving Dhaka, where he had arrived late on Wednesday, the Prince had talks with President Shahabuddin at the Bangabhaban Presidential Palace and with Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the Prime Minister.

Yeltsin is due to give a state of the nation address next Thursday, during which he is expected to announce any changes in the Government.

Earlier this week there were rumours that Mr Chernomyrdin was himself under threat, but it is widely felt that his position — bolstered by four years of unwavering loyalty to Mr Yeltsin — is secure.

**US Army 'pursuing witch-hunt over gays'**

FROM IAN BRODIE  
IN WASHINGTON

MORE homosexuals and lesbians are being discharged from the US armed forces under President Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy than before it came into effect, a study showed yesterday.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a group providing lawyers for military personnel accused of homosexuality, said that the spirit of the law was being broken by a deliberate pattern of witch-hunts throughout the ranks, including seizures of diaries and threats of prison against those accused unless they betrayed other gays.

Last year 850 people were discharged by the Pentagon for homosexual activities, compared with 682 in 1993 when there was still officially no tolerance for homosexuals and the armed forces were larger.

The "don't ask, don't tell" policy was a shaky compromise between Mr Clinton, who had campaigned on a promise to end the ban on homosexuals in the services, and those in the Pentagon and Congress who were determined to keep the ban. The new law continues to ban gays in uniform, but bars the active hunting down of them by military commanders.

Yet that is still happening, according to yesterday's report. It said the new policy had evolved into a Machiavellian system where the end justified any means of ferreting out all gay men and women who serve our country. Discharges fell disproportionately hard on women who make up 13 per cent of the armed forces but accounted for nearly a third of the dismissals. Women were often accused of being lesbians after rebuffing male sexual advances or reporting sexual abuse, the study said.

William Cohen, US Defence Secretary, denied that the growing number of dismissals warranted a change in policy. He promised, though, that if he found there was active pursuit and prosecution of gays, it would be halted. In Congress, 36 members demanded that he take immediate action to protect gays and lesbians from harassment.

## Defence chief faces sack after Yeltsin orders end to 'whining'

**MOSCOW:** Political speculation about an expected government reshuffle intensified in Moscow yesterday (Robin Lodge writes). The position of the Defence Minister appeared the most precarious after President Yeltsin's call this week for drastic changes.

Mr Yeltsin, who earlier had castigated Viktor Chernomyrdin, his Prime Minister, for failing to

deal with the problem of non-payment of state wages and pensions, turned his ire on Wednesday night on Igor Rodionov, the Defence Minister, ordering him to "stop whining" and get on with implementing long-awaited military reforms.

The press indulged in much speculation yesterday about the likelihood of ministerial dismissals.

With many focusing on General Rodionov and Viktor Ilyushin, a former Yeltsin aide promoted last year to First Deputy Prime Minister with special responsibility for social policy, "Ilyushin is virtually a political corpse," the Moscow daily *Moskovsky Komsomolets* wrote, citing unnamed sources within the Government.

Mr Yeltsin's assault on his De-

fence Minister was prompted by clashes between General Rodionov and Yuri Baturin, head of the Defence Council, over how best to deal with a catastrophic decline in Russia's armed forces. General Baturin has called for radical defence cuts as a first step to reforms; General Rodionov is demanding more government funds to guarantee living standards of servicemen

and restore morale. He has also accused General Baturin of playing down the problem.

The Kremlin reprimanded the Defence Minister for speaking out and called on the two men to work together. "The President knows how difficult it is now for the men in epaulettes. But whining will not help matters; concrete actions are needed," it said in a statement. Mr

Yeltsin is due to give a state of the nation address next Thursday, during which he is expected to announce any changes in the Government.

Earlier this week there were rumours that Mr Chernomyrdin was himself under threat, but it is widely felt that his position — bolstered by four years of unswerving loyalty to Mr Yeltsin — is secure.

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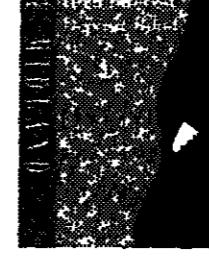


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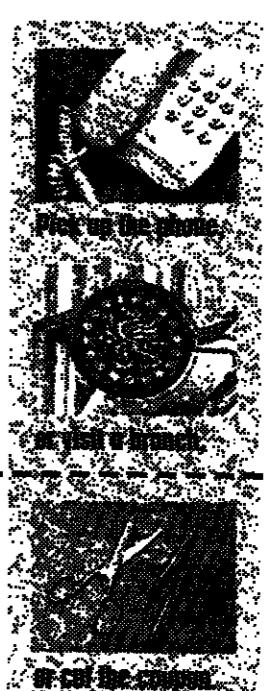
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# When fashion designers' parties are the measure of a capital's cool



Naomi Campbell with Joaquim Cortes at the Miu Miu party, which was held at The Naval and Military Club in Piccadilly during London Fashion Week



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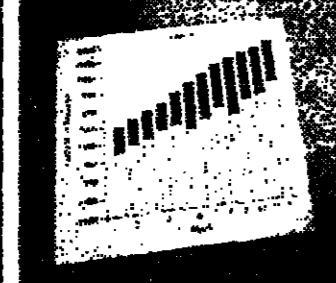
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**Exhausted and all partied out — at the end of London Fashion Week, Style Editor Grace Bradberry finds designers just want to have fun**

Ever since *Newsweek* produced their "Cool Britannia" issue, London's resurgence as a fashion capital has been a media fact.

This month's *Vanity Fair* runs home the message with the original strapline "London Swings Again" below a picture of Patsy Kensit in a black bra, and Liam Gallagher, swathed in a Union Jack and showing off his armpit.

But no matter how much hyperbole enters the headlines, nor how outlandish the venue for Alexander McQueen's catwalk show, there can only be one true barometer of a capital's cool — the parties.

The pace was set last season by the American designer Donna Karan, who blew half a million pounds, converting a Shepherds Bush warehouse into the sort of place Karan would choose to live — all monotone Moroccan, with hundreds of candles and cream floor cushions.

But there has been nothing much since. The opening of Calvin Klein's Bond Street store is still months away, and Versace's Rock And Royalty party, which might have upstaged anything in London Fashion Week, was abandoned when Diana, Princess of Wales, took umbrage at the contents of the accompanying book for which she had written a foreword, and refused to attend.

Many in the fashion world will have breathed a sigh of relief that Versace's £100-a-ticket bash was cancelled. Not only is Versace renowned for throwing thoroughly tacky parties, but they might also have been forced to pay — and there is nothing that industry insiders loathe more.

The perfect party in the eyes of the fashion world was probably that thrown by Donna Karan. She carefully delineated the status of its members, inviting "front row" fashion editors to an intimate dinner for 300, where they could mingle with celebrities and supermodels, before 500 of their less distinguished peers were allowed in for the after-dinner party.

By contrast, the Miu Miu party on Sunday, which was the event of London Fashion Week, was superficially a democratic affair. The host, Miuccia Prada, was once a member of the Italian Communist Party, and is what counts in fashion as an "intellectual". She is famous for leading the move away from obvious status symbols — the gold-chained Chanel handbag — to less obvious ones — her own black nylon bags, bearing a discreet but instantly recognisable triangle logo.

Her party for 1,000, held at The In and Out Club (The Naval and Military Club) in Piccadilly, was planned as the very antithesis of a Versace bash. The theme was a debutante's first party — though how many debutantes' parents are now prepared to spend £20,000 moving in antique furniture, planting ivy in the courtyard and flying a cocktail

mixer in from New York is questionable.

About 600 of the guests were from the fashion industry. Vivienne Westwood, whose show had preceded Miu Miu, looked especially smug, having robbed Prada of publicity by using 13-year-olds on the catwalk. The shoe designer Patrick Cox was there, as was Selina Blow, wearing one of her own velvet coats.

The remaining 400 guests were friends of Miuccia — a gaggle of Italians who made their way swiftly to the restaurant — and assorted hip people drawn largely from the film and music industries.

Naomi Campbell arrived with her current boyfriend, the flamenco dancer Joaquin Cortes, and again disappeared into the restaurant where she dined with Miuccia.

Indeed, as celebrities arrived, they just as soon disappeared into the dining room. It was only when lower guests tried to penetrate this inner sanctum that the flawed nature of democracy became clear. Anxious to please the VIPs, the maître d', borrowed from the London restaurant Quo Vadis, turned most others into diners with Miuccia.

Held on the same night as the Antonio Berardi show, the Berardi party, another bash thrown by the Spanish designer Amaya Arzuaga, and the opening of the Antonio Lopez Art, Jimmy Choo's party faced some pretty stiff competition.

Tamara Beckwith was one of the few to wear Choo's shoes — Tara and her friend Lucy Sykes, a stylist in New York, confessed that they had meant to borrow some but had been too disorganized.

Mandy Smith, who had arrived from the Jerry McGuire premiere, declared that wearing the designer's own label was "naïf", before adding that she had preferred the previous party: "Fashion parties should chill out and I don't mean with drugs or alcohol — people should loosen up and talk to each other."

Later in the evening, the Prada team themselves became victims of celebrity hunting when The Artist Formerly Known As Prince settled into the red smoking-room surrounded himself with bodyguards, and refused to let any of them come near.

This, and the impossibility of securing a table, provided ample topics of conversation when alternative topics — was that Damien Hirst? (it was; had the McQueen ticket arrived yet? it hadn't); had the dress been bought at discount or cost price? (no industry insider ever pays the full whack) — had been exhausted.

Conversation was aided by the huge supply of alcohol. This was not an event at which to order spritzers. Instead, the evening virtually swam in Louis Roederer champagne, washed down with pink Litchfield gin, Mai Tais and Bourbon Sours. Upstairs, just before the dancefloor, (tiny fashion people don't dance), was the cocktail bar, manned by Eugene, flown in specially from the Pravda bar in New York. The specialty was something called Carol Channing (Mad About Millie), vodka-based, like all Eugene's cocktails, mixed with raspberry.

But then if Britain's most influential fashion magazine is to support the British fashion industry, it could do worse than create a desperate need for dresses that would have no place in any other walk of life.

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Sam Mendes on directing, learnt by experience and observation: "It combines amateur psychology, sports coaching, visual art. You become an intellectual and visual magpie"

## Theatre's hot ticket

**I**t is tempting to see Sam Mendes, the theatre's blue-eyed *wunderkind*, as the bachelorette thirty-something hero of *Company*, the Stephen Sondheim musical he directed, to be televised in *Performance* on BBC2 tomorrow night who observes his married friends and reflects on the difficulty of commitment, and his own loneliness. Mendes has no aversion to marriage, but has avoided it so far. When he and Jane Horrocks were an item, and I interviewed Jane, she said: "Do we 'ave ter talk about Sam? Not the words of an imminent bride, I thought. That is now over, but they remain good friends."

It would be hard not to be friends with Sam, a young man (31) full of charm and quick intelligence. His meteoric success cannot be due entirely to luck, steady ambition or even talent: he is good with people, too.

The name Mendes is Portuguese. His forebathers sailed to Trinidad in a banana boat from Madeira, and his grandfather, the novelist Alfred Mendes, started the literary magazine *The Beacon* with V. S. Naipaul and C. R. James. Alfred, educated at the Quaker Friends' School in Safron Walden, was a character, a carouser, a raconteur, a womanizer. Sam, browsing with his father in a second-hand bookshop once, found, in

Sam Mendes is young, sexy, and already one of our most accomplished theatre directors, but from the beginning he has made his own luck

### THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



Owen Rutter's *If Crab No Walk A Traveller in the West Indies*, seven pages on his grandfather who, Rutter said, "introduced me to my brother in Port of Spain". "He was still the same at 80," Sam says. When Sam was 14, his mother took him from Oxford, where he attended Magdalen College School, to Stratford to see his O-level set text, *The Merchant of Venice*, with V. S. Naipaul and C. R. James. Alfred, educated at the Quaker Friends' School in Safron Walden, was a character, a carouser, a raconteur, a womanizer. Sam, browsing with his father in a second-hand bookshop once, found, in

captivated by Helen Mirren as Cleopatra in her excitingly diaphanous gown. "The theatre became a stabilising influence in a rather unstable childhood." (His parents divorced when he was five.)

But young Sam fixed his own luck: in his gap year he worked at the Guggenheim in Venice, but by the time he arrived at Peterhouse, Cambridge ("a very tie-wearing college") he'd switched to English. He put on a college production of a David Halliwell play and knew by day one of rehearsals that directing would be his game.

Having graduated with a first, he was given a job at Chichester by John Gage, gratefully mopping the stage for £50 a week and being allowed to direct Chekhov's *Swansong and the Bear* and *The Marriage Proposal*, for one night only. "I tried so hard to make it work. I kept the cast at it way into the night." Rave reviews ensued. Gage gave him, at 23, the newly built Minerva Theatre to play with.

**S**o he became "this wonderful new young chap, Sam Mendes". He did London Assurance with Paul Eddington, *The Cherry Orchard* with Judi Dench — casting people he had worshipped on television. He directed *Kean* with Derek Jacobi, Ralph Fiennes and Amanda Root in *Troilus and Cressida* for the RSC. Then along came *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*.

This quirky concoction sprang from Jane Horrocks's gift for impersonating singers in a voice that erupted unerringly from flat-chested wail. Michael Codron sent Jim Cartwright's embryo script to Mendes; rehearsals were chaotic, as the play was written while they worked, and

Mendes says it was difficult to rein in. It remains — though about 20 minutes too long — one of those unforgettable theatrical events of the 1990s.

"I first met Jane in the form of a cassette tape. 'Hello Sam,' (he mimics Jane Horrocks's broad Lancashire). This is my tape. Here's Judy Garland... This is Billie Holiday... Paf... Gracie Fields." Laughing the whole time. They had supper in this very restaurant (the Mezzanine at the National) and after "circling round each other warily" were a couple by the time he directed her as Sally Bowles in

*Cabaret*. They never shared a home, but Mendes took Jane to Trinidad to meet his relations and she took him to Rawtenstall, Lancashire, to meet hers. It was not such a culture shock: he'd lived in Manchester when his father taught English at the university, and his stepmother is a Mancunian. But the two were chalk and cheese. Jane Horrocks is not really like Ab Fab's Bubble, but she is no great reader, while Sam's cottage, a former almshouse near Oxford, is lined with books.

He bought that after going commercial: he makes "absurd" sums of money from his long-running *Oliver!* at the Palladium. On the other hand, in his mid-twenties he directed at three of the country's major companies (the National, the RSC and the Young Vic) in one year for a total of £15,000.

There is a mystery about the bizarre craft of directing. It is invisible but noticeable, and cannot be taught except by experience and observation.

"It combines amateur psychology, sports coaching, visual art. You become an intellectual and visual magpie." For *The Glass Menagerie* he got deep into New Orleans. I left him browsing through an American academic's thesis on racism in *Othello*. His *Othello* (or "Othella" as the BBC's handout has it) will open at the National in September.

Directing is both a solitary and a social life. "But I'm a team player," he says. I am told he wears a useful bat for The Gaeties, Harold Pinter's cricket team. He is also conscious of the "ultimate variety" of acting. "Would you be an actor?"

That neurotic, paranoia-inducing profession? But he acknowledges that a first night has the emotional impact of a car crash. "Even I, singing in the bar nursing my drink, am paralysed with fear, and I'm not even on the stage."

Sam Mendes and the Donmar, named after Donald Albery and Margot Fonteyn and known as "the sexiest space in London", are now an institution. He has become one of the new Labour entrepreneurs, grateful for Arts Council grants but also adept at wooing private funding. "You know the Tories, the most destructive influence on the arts, have been in power since I was 14! I pray Labour gets in." He commissions new work, but "unless the material is better than you, it's not worth working on", and says it is one thing to visualise a historical period on stage, but quite another to imagine and reinvent it from the inside — as novelists such as Barry Unsworth, Patrick Suskind,

and the new bestseller Andrew Miller can. Mendes's next show will be a musical, *The Fix*, a dark political comedy from New York: expect more House Full boards to go up.

Meanwhile tomorrow night viewers can see, on BBC2, the Donmar production of *Company*, one of last year's hot tickets with its haunting songs (*Barcelona*, *Little Things We Do Together*, *Not Getting Married Today* etc). It will be followed, on Saturday nights, by Kevin Elyot's *My Night With Reg*; Fiona Shaw as *Richard II*; Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass*.

Playwrights recoil at the idea of televising theatrical productions. But doesn't it make sense? In New York, the Museum of Modern Art keeps an archive of such tapes — and would not posterity love to see Garrick or Ellen Terry, or Gielgud's Hamlet on stage?

Besides, having often paid £100 for my family to see a play about which the critics have been all too kind, I wish that we had watched it in comfort at home: at least you can switch off. And one night's television audience of millions would take a 14-year run in the West End to achieve.

The Donmar has acquired its own special buzz, like the Royal Court and the Almeida — and Mendes says he can't imagine anywhere he would rather operate.

Not even the National? He was invited to apply for Richard Eyre's job, soon to be Trevor Nunn's, but he rightly declined. It came too soon. "It would have consumed ten years of my life, and there are many things I don't possess to keep a perspective on a job like this. I don't have a family or a home base."

"I've been spat out at 45, blinking in the sunlight. I would love to run a big theatre some time. But I have many other things to do first — films, musicals, opera..."

## A corner of Paris that remains forever England

Joseph Connolly on a shop the French have taken to heart

**B**ritish designers such as John Galliano and Alexander McQueen may or may not be taking Paris by storm, but what is absolutely sure is that there is a little corner of Paris that truly has been England for the past 75 years. The shirt-maker Hilditch & Key is the oldest English shop in the capital, and beautifully situated on the Rue de Rivoli, directly opposite the Place de la Concorde.

What is quite startling about this 1920s establishment, however, is the way it has become adopted and adored by the very cream of French society, politics, arts and aristocracy — to say nothing of a clutch of the most internationally famous French designers of all.

During the first week of this year, Edward Ballard — an old customer — strolled into the shop and selected half a dozen shirts. A recent cover of *Le Figaro* shows him wearing a Hilditch shirt, cravat and very fetching multi-colour striped alpaca cardigan. But it is the designers' vote that really counts. Karl Lagerfeld has all his shirts hand-made by Hilditch & Key, whose files are bulging with handwritten letters from him, praising the perfection of the product.

Most of the shirts sold are ready-made, but if you go for bespoke, then you are buying the best in the world: even the buttonholes are sewn entirely by hand — and you simply don't encounter that these days, outside Savile Row, and then only with the suits. Lagerfeld is not the only person at Chanel who finds H&K irresistible. The women's clothes — shirts, scarves, sweaters, wraps and the like — are superb, and the shop has many female fans — Elle Macpherson, Claudia Schiffer, Jane Birkin — even Paloma Picasso. The shop is managed by Bruce



thing that small English companies were noted for doing. The merchandise in the Paris shop is rather more daring than in its London counterparts — cashmere sweaters (a firm favourite) in strong and vivid colours, luxurious cashmere and wool dressing gowns and shirts with a touch more pizazz.

It is impossible to think of any other non-French shop that has anything like such a hold on Paris as Hilditch & Key — most of the people who make Paris what it is walk through its doors. Hilditch & Key goes about its business with rather more subtlety than the newly elevated breed of British couturiers, but certainly the approach is arresting — H&K has le tout Paris both collared and cuffed.

• Hilditch & Key is at 25 Rue de Rivoli (Place de la Concorde) 75001 Paris. Also at 37 and 73 Jermyn Street, London SW1 and 131 Sloane Street, London SW1.

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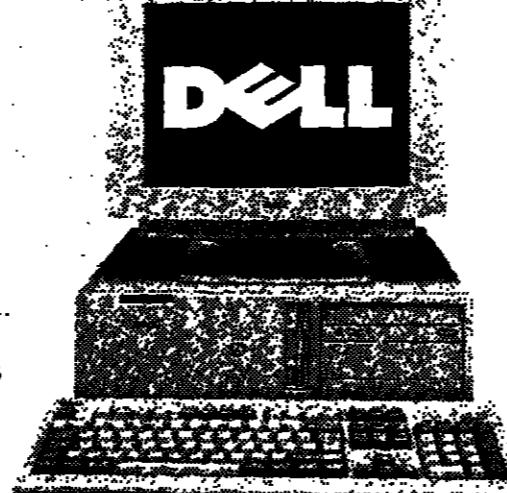
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## Philip Howard



■ After Dolly, who next? I can think of two candidates for cloning

If we are going to clone the treasures of our human resources, Ted Heath should be the first. He will just have to spare us a few adult cells from somewhere for the heritage preservation industry.

But the Heath clone we want is not Sailor Ted skipping *Morning Cloud* to victory in the *Admiral's Cup*. Nor is it choral scholar Ted rapt at his Christmas card concert or conducting his recording of Elgar's *Cockaigne* overture. Nor is it jolly Ted with shoulders heaving. Nor is it technocrat Ted rattling off quotas of bananas and butter so fast that his performances win him from *Private Eye* the nickname of Grocer. Nor is it bestselling author Ted flogging his books (of an almost Archerish banality, particularly sound on banquet menus) from a special train around the politer suburbs, where buying an autographed copy was the next best thing to voting Tory in years without an election. Nor is he the radical, classless Ted, the first Tory Prime Minister from a grammar school.

All these are Ted Heaths we know and love — no doubt to different degrees. But the Heath at the evolutionary stage that we should clone is the grumpy old boy in a bulk. For as that is a unique treasure and irreplaceable. We need the Father of the House glowering at the Grocer's Daughter from his seat below the gangway. We must preserve the Ted Heath selectively pouring scorn on her economic policies and her lack of vision about Europe. We want the red Heath who disliked two things above all else: people who disagreed with him and women. And Margaret Thatcher happened to be both. We want the Heath whom Nicky Fairbairn described as "a little boy sucking his misogynist thumb and blubbing and carping in the corner of the front bench below the gangway". We recognise with delight the Ted Heath of whom George Gardiner, with more truth than black propaganda for once, observed that "receiving support from him in a by-election is like being measured by an undertaker".

For that image from the chrysalis Ted Heath is an English institution. And his role as national Mr Grumpy is an archetype. Grumpy has been a fiery star from *Timon of Athens* to Molière's *Misanthrope*, and from *Scrooge* to Stader and Waldorf, the two Muppet curmudgeons. Thereses played his part in the *Iliad*. And one of the first comedies of the Western stage is Menander's *Dyskolos* or *The Grouch*. Literature as well as life would be poorer without such bad-tempered figures of both fear and fun. Children like to be terrified by rage that is clearly pretended.

After we have cloned Ted Heath for the nation, and incidentally ensured that he can appear simultaneously on *Newsnight* and *News at Ten*, we must consider other national heroes for cloning. Another archetype as powerful as the angry old man in a hate is the sage and seer, the wise Merlin figure who can foresee the future from his knowledge of the past. And a strong candidate for that clone is my former Editor who appears on this page on Mondays and Thursdays.

I went to Gaudy (old boys' reunion feast) at Trinity, Oxford. The main speaker, as is the ritual on these occasions, was praising Trinity and Trinity men of bygone days to the skies, when a Falstaffian archetype halfway down the hall rose unsteadily to his feet and cried: "I have an anecdote!" His neighbours pulled him down by his sleeves. But he bobbed straight up again like a bad apple. So he had either to be carried out or left to tell his anecdote. The latter course seemed more prudent. His anecdote ran: "Of course Trinity in our day was the best college head of the river, winner of Cuppers, home of the brave. But by far the most celebrated event in my time was performed by me. There was this dreadful swot at Balliol over the wall from my rooms. Called Rees-Mogg. Always getting his name in the papers. Well I got my two Service revolvers, and let off 12 rounds at him one night when he was sitting there illuminated. Missed the bugger. But I must have given him one hell of a fright. I often wonder what happened to him in later life."

Just in case there are such Trinity scholars still around, let us clone William for the nation, at once.

Tessa Blackstone accuses the Government of neglecting culture, and outlines Labour's arts policy

# Heritage versus a creative economy

Recently there has been an avalanche of press reports describing London as the style capital of the world, a symbol of a suddenly discovered, or perhaps rediscovered "Cool Britannia". Behind all the hype lurks a truth we seem reluctant to acknowledge. It is that as a nation we are pre-eminent in almost every field of the arts and cultural innovation, what Tony Blair in a recent speech on the arts called "the creative economy".

The facts speak for themselves. We account for something like 20 per cent of world sales of recorded music. *Les Misérables* has become a major export industry in its own right, clocking up almost £600 million in overseas earnings. The most innovative and successful creator of electronic games, itself a £6 billion a year industry, is based on Merseyside. And so on. In theatre, fashion, television, design, advertising and architecture, Britain is a world leader. These are formidable assets in a global economy which is more and more driven by a trade in ideas as well as goods.

"Intellectual property" such as music, the audiovisual industries, publishing, software, and other industries whose value derives essentially from rights and royalties, now earns more for the American economy than any other sector. It is growing twice as fast as the rest of the economy and generating jobs almost four times faster. That trend is

mirrored in Britain. The 1991 census revealed that employment in the cultural industries grew 34 per cent in ten years, against a background of virtually no change in overall employment.

That is not to suggest that the nation's

cultural life is nothing more than a useful export industry. The arts are an essential component of any civilised society. In an age of uncertainty about our values, they can provide powerful forms of self-identity and communication for individuals and for the nation as a whole. They should stimulate not just national pride but also rational policy. Sadly, the Government has failed to recognise either their commercial or their cultural significance, and the success with which many local authorities have put the arts at the centre of local economies and of civic pride has been accomplished despite the efforts of central government. There are many examples of government failure, from

the lack of adequate planning for the distribution of National Lottery money to the lack of support for dance and drama students, which means the next generation of performing talent is not getting the opportunities it deserves.

Predictably, an overprescriptive national

curriculum has squeezed the arts from school timetables, as a damping report last year from the Royal Society of Arts confirmed. We need to rehabilitate the arts as a legitimate area of public policy. One way to start is by putting them back where they properly belong — at the heart of education. Arts and education feed each other. Schools and colleges are the source both of the arts and the audiences of the future.

For sound social and economic reasons, it behoves good government to foster a climate in which the arts are accessible to all and in which excellence is valued and nurtured. We can build on the commitment of the best local authorities and the innovative work of

the regional arts boards, allowing the Arts Council to be a strategic planner and promoter of good practice. We should recognise that broadcasting is the dominant means of access to an enjoyment of the arts. The BBC's power as a patron of the arts far exceeds that of the Arts Council itself, and on the basis of its Oscar nominations, Channel 4 claims to rank alongside some of the Hollywood studios as a successful film-maker. The recent Labour Party lottery review rightly recommended that all major arts funding applications should include plans to use broadcasting to reach new audiences. More television channels and the advent of digital terrestrial television will make the role of broadcasters even more important.

An arts scene that is genuinely

popular and lively, with engaged and critical audiences, enables talent to flourish. At present, too much talent goes unrecognised and undeveloped.

Labour's proposal for a National Endowment for Science, Humanities and the Arts ("Nesta") is intended to address this sad state of affairs. Just as the National Trust encourages endowments of land and property to be enjoyed by future generations, Nesta will encourage artists and other creative people to donate copyrights as an endowment for the support of future talent. Today's successes will provide seed-corn for tomorrow's.

In that sense, the scheme is a paradigm, of what a good arts policy should be, building on the heritage of the past, not for its own sake but to discover new directions for the future. It is unfortunate that the government department responsible for the arts goes under the label of "heritage". It should be more concerned with the future than with the past, not least because that future looks bright. The vitality of our cultural life will be a key element in any attempt to rebuild a more cohesive and inclusive society. It also seems likely to be an increasingly significant motor of the national economy, a major potential source of jobs and wealth and one of the most attractive aspects of our international image. It adds up to an enviable position from which to step into a new millennium, and that is a bonus we ought not to waste.

**Baroness Blackstone is a Labour spokesman in the Lords.**

# The West Lothian nightmare

What would a Scottish parliament do to England? Make chauvinists the Tories

**I**t is February 1999. Labour has won the 1997 election and, after a short Commons struggle, instituted referendums in Wales and Scotland to discover whether their peoples deserved parliaments of their own. The Scots' referendum has included a second question: Shall their parliament have tax-raising powers?

Wales has voted narrowly against a parliament, while Scotland voted "yes" to a parliament but "no" to tax-raising powers. After a long and debilitating fight in the Commons and Lords, a Bill to give Scotland its parliament has passed, the institution has been set up in Edinburgh, and elections to it have taken place. Edinburgh's remit includes health, education, local government, employment, heritage, transport, home affairs (most of them) and a fair measure of the portfolio of the former "President of the Board of Trade" too.

As Edinburgh has no power to raise revenue, but must govern with grants from Westminster, the Scots parliament is in a state of permanent rage at what its members see as inadequate funding from London. Every domestic ill or want is blamed on insufficient resources from London. Scots political careers are being carved by skill in doing this, and conflict is stirred cruelly by the Principal Opposition in Edinburgh, the Scottish National Party, which portrays Scottish Labour (the governing party) as the poodle of an English master, Tony Blair. The campaign brings the SNP rewards in local government elections, Scottish Labour members and their Edinburgh leader, a Mr Robert Mackay, are driven into the most intransigent posture they dare risk, against the Labour government in England. The Scottish National Party is boycotting the London legislature.

The English electorate is baffled and annoyed by all this. Voters hardly understand the feuding within the ruling Labour Party, and are not disposed to try. They are left with a vague feeling that Scottish politicians are a troublesome, greedy and ungrateful lot.

They are, of course, ruled by Scottish politicians — "ruled" in the sense that Scotland has also sent some 55 Scottish MPs to Westminster, where the London government's overall majority is 37.

Without these Scots colleagues in the Westminster division lobbies, none of the government's measures, including all its measures for English health, education, local government and so forth, could be passed.

The temperature is high, misunderstandings are easy to fan. Into this unhappy scene step the Secretary of State for Local Government in England and Wales, the northerner Jack Cunningham, and his Edinburgh opposite number, Mr Mackay. There has been a growing need to choose a site in which to bury low-level nuclear waste, produced in both Scottish and English power stations. Possible sites have been identified in Northumbria and Fife.

English MPs from the North East are enraged, but the whole Scottish Labour Party confronts Prime Minister Blair with the truth that the SNP will make mincemeat of them if Fife is chosen — for Sassenach waste! Blair, weakened by other disputes, tips his London Cabinet into recommending Northumbria.

Mackay beats Cunningham. There is a rebellion by English Labour MPs from the North East plus the whole Tory Opposition, but, using his army of 55 Scots MPs, Blair crushes it in the Westminster division lobbies.

It is unfortunate that at this moment two government Bills are overturned in the as yet unreformed Lords: one to dismantle the last remaining grammar schools in England, the other (the NHS being in one of the more acute of its cash crises) to give the English Health Secretary emergency powers to close hospitals in England without the customary consultation and delay. Returning to the Commons, both Bills provoke rebellions by English MPs, but the Scottish Labour infantry is used to beat both down.

Matthew Parris

**F**arever endowed me with brains, brawn or good looks in any unusual measure; but what did come my way was a calm and massive faith in the power of a sound argument. Grasp that rope, and in the end you will never be confounded. To my surprise, better men than me — cleverer, sometimes, too — gibber in the face of the opinions of others. Being, at heart, always a little afraid of logic, they weigh arguments like flour — "How strongly do how many people feel about this now?" — rather than evaluating what is sustainable. Thus they minimise the risk of being confounded by their peers, preferring the risk of being confounded by events.

And so we come to this Tuesday's headline to *The Times* from Lord Jenkins of Hillhead. Jenkins is a good, brave man with a powerful mind; but he has taken flight not at the logic of the devolutionists' case, but at its passion. After a

discussion into the Irish question in the 19th century, he urges that a parliament for Scotland "had better be accepted" or else the Union will be in danger.

But that is not an argument, it is a threat. Lord Jenkins offers it as his solution to this threat: "the West Lothian question. Or, rather, he declares that in the face of this threat, "the West Lothian question, neatly unanswerable although it is, falls into insignificance". It is easy to picture the civilised yet dismissive wave of the wrist with which Lord Jenkins would say "falls into insignificance".

But does it? Will it? Does the question "What would Scottish MPs at Westminster be for?" fall into insignificance? More than two-thirds of the Commons business this week past — a National Heritage Bill, London Underground, social security, the Church of England, education and employment... — would, after devolution, have gone to Edinburgh or appear as "English and Welsh" business at Westminster. Does it "fall into insignificance" to ask what Scottish MPs at Westminster be doing here?

When the votes of Scottish MPs, strangers to their own country's parliament, swing the Commons axe over St

Thomas's Hospital in London, slash grants to English local authorities, abolish English grammar schools or direct the burial of nuclear waste in England, will the West Lothian question fall into insignificance? Let Scottish MPs' votes clinch the closure of Devonport naval dockyard, and wait for the *Sun* headline: "Jocks sock docks shock"; wait for the *Daily Mail*: "Bury Dounreay waste in Northumbria say Scots MPs"; wait for the first brick through the window of the first Scottish MP's London apartment; and ask yourself whether that brick, and the anger which will prop it, "falls into insignificance".

Few can match Lord Jenkins's understanding of the Irish question at the end of the last century, but some of us have some understanding of the Tory party at the end of this one. I say to him — what none of the present Cabinet can say but many fear — that his road leads inexorably to the emergence of the English Conservative Party and precisely the "little England chauvinism" that he and I so fear. If, with me, he had watched the response and body-language of the government benches during last week's thrilling debate on devolution, he would know that this

could come very fast — within months, not years. It is simmering beneath the surface now.

Lord Jenkins says the West Lothian question is unanswerable. It is not. There is a simple answer: the establishment of a comparable parliament for England: not bits of England, not the East Midlands or the Welsh Marches, but England. If we get Scottish devolution, this will become the official policy of the Conservative Party, before the millennium.

It is not too late — but there remain only days — for Mr Blair to withdraw his proposals, in favour of a new post-election consultation across the parties. It is not too late for Mr Major to respond with a recognition that the rage England would feel against Scottish rule is the rage Scots feel now about rule from England. It's an embarrassment and a bore, but weary and painfully, both sides must agree to tear up their cardboard models and start again.

This will be almost impossible for Mr Blair to do. But that he wants to and knows he ought to, I can know without speaking to him. I can know because I know he, too, understands the power of argument.

## Bell rings

THEY are already manning the boats at Conservative Central Office for after the election. Charles Lewington, the director of communications at Smith Square, is said to be in the first liferaft. He plans to leave Central Office after the election, whatever the result.

He tells some that he fancies a return to newspapers, which may be difficult for a while in the light of his obviously politically slanted work over the past couple of years. Others, however, seem sure that he will be finding his way into a political hatcher-man.

Bell's company has been a useful halfway house for many former political advisers. Jonathan Hill, the Prime Minister's political secretary, went there after No 10, as did Stephen Sherbourne, Margaret Thatcher's political secretary.

As one former colleague of Lewington's puts it: "He'd love it with Bell. He is after all a man who likes plants on his desk and his coffee out of china cups."

There is rife among visitors to the Royal Opera House at the moment. They have been taking moments such as lavatory signs before the place closes for a two-year refit in July. Keith Cooper, the general manager of the ROH, is keen to stop the crinewave. "There

will be plenty of opportunity for people to buy their momentos, so they needn't steal them." So enough of the furtive trousering.

### One's rush

THE unprecedented levels of security surrounding the state visit of President Weizman of Israel seem to have inconvenienced the Queen as well as London's drivers. On Wednesday, she found herself delayed en route to the unveiling of the Raoul Wallenberg statue.

When she arrived, before either

her greeting party or her chauffeur could make it to open her door, she had dispensed with ceremony, opened the door herself and got out to be greeted by a flushed Lord Mayor.

FOR anyone still baffled about precisely what it is spin-doctors do, a good example appeared in yesterday's *Sun*. Blazoned across two pages were Tony Blair and his wife, with the Labour leader saying he would "walk away from politics tomorrow" if he was forced to choose between his family and his job.

Only last week, Blair was completely outflanked on the family front in *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Asked to name the most sig-

nificant events in their lives, a blushing John Major nominated his marriage to Norma, while Blair offered his election as leader of the Labour Party. Thanks to the spinners who guard his image, the record has been put straight.

### Hats off

THIS evening sees John Major fundraising in Glasgow for a silly hat party. It has all the makings of a disaster. Marquess are planned on the banks of the Clyde. Unfortunately, so are gales.

Impressing the judges at this year's Miss Belgium beauty contest will require more than two hats and an intimate knowledge of nail-varnish. Marquess are planned on the banks of the Clyde. Unfortunately, so are gales. Major headache

Comedy hats will be handed out at the entrance, presumably in homage to Douglas Hogg and the PM's own appearance in tribal headdress at the Khyber Pass earlier this year. By way of a challenge to any paparazzi, the order has come from No 10: no cameras.

### Grey gay

ON THE stage at the Fridge night-club in Brixton on Wednesday night was a young man in shorts, carrying a snorkel shouting "I'm gay and I work for the Treasury. Meet John Gillespie, Band C civil servant and enthusiastic entrant in the London heats of Mr Gay UK."

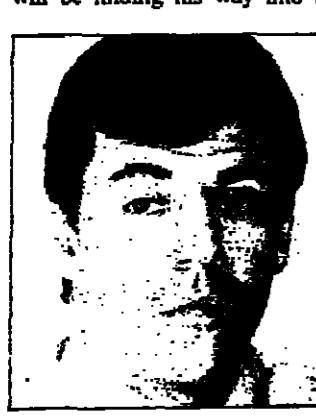
Greasing up backstage before the show, Gillespie confessed that although he was concerned about what this might do to his promotion prospects, he was tired of the anonymity of Civil Service work and "always wanted to be famous".



Sandrine: euro one

"He's big, enjoys rowing, dancing and vandalism," said the compere. "His role model is ex-Take That, Gary Barlow," and on came Gillespie in trunks and vest. He soon dispensed with the top, removed the snorkel from between his lips and let out a high-pitched cry: "I work for the Treasury, and it is cool." He did not qualify for the next round.

P.H.S.



Lewington: way out



## ANKARA COUP FEVER

Warning time for Turkey and its allies

Turkey is a pivotal member of Nato. Its integrity and democracy are vital not only to regional stability but to the Atlantic alliance as a whole. Turkish democracy now looks increasingly imperilled. The Islamic Government of Necmettin Erbakan has embarked on a campaign to give Islam a more visible position in Turkish public life. This has alarmed many people, including politicians, who see a threat to the long-established secular Constitution. President Demirel, an influential political veteran, has made clear his concern. More ominously, the Turkish Army, which sees itself as a guardian of the Ataturk Constitution, is implacably opposed to the trend. It has already sent tanks through the capital's Islamic suburbs as a warning. Today Mr Erbakan has a crucial meeting with senior officers. Tension is running high, and rumours are rife. The threat of a military coup is everywhere.

To dismiss the army's concern as bluster is to underestimate its power and growing dismay at the fumbling of Mr Erbakan's ill-matched coalition. Turkey's military establishment is far from happy. It had hoped, along with other weary voters, that the advent to power of the Welfare Party might lead to a breakthrough in the guerrilla war with the Kurds — a conflict that has taken more than 12,000 lives. Under an Islamic banner of unity, it was hoped that Mr Erbakan might be able to satisfy Kurdish political and cultural demands. No such thing has happened, and the war goes on.

The army has also looked with dismay at the Government's crass attempts to pursue an Islamic foreign policy with provocative visits by Mr Erbakan to Iran and Libya. These have weakened Turkey's influence in Washington and been used by the Greek lobby there to undermine Turkey's request for new weapons. As a result, Turkey is now subject to an undeclared weapons embargo. For the army, Nato is a source of strength

and pride; anything that weakens Turkey's position in the alliance is deeply resented.

European policy has been equally unsuccessful — although the Europeans are largely to blame. The worsening relations with Greece, the provocative Cypriot insistence on buying Russian missiles and the European Union's continued withholding of funds to offset Turkish losses from the customs union have all made the Government look weak and increased a sense of isolation in Ankara. Turkey, one of the earliest applicants for full EU membership, is now seen as being overtaken in the queue by 11 other applicants. And with Greece hauling on the brakes, the EU seems unwilling to offer Turkey even the face-saving guarantee that its case will be considered equally with the others.

Despite a long campaign against the Islamists by other political parties, voters took a chance on Welfare. They thought that nothing could be worse than the mess made by the traditional parties; and they believed that the army and any secular coalition partner would keep the Islamic trend under control. In the second they have been disappointed. High-profile rows such as those over the attempt to allow women civil servants to wear headscarves and a proposal to build a new mosque in Istanbul's main square have convinced many that the Government is encouraging Islamic fundamentalism and that Tansu Ciller, the junior coalition partner, has little power to stop it.

Yet no one wants the army to step in, as it did in 1960 and 1980. It would be a disastrous setback for Turkish democracy and encourage Islamic underground fanaticism. The economy is in better shape than in 1980 and the army itself knows the risk of intervention. President Demirel has no power to dismiss the Prime Minister. But he and the army officers can warn him of the dangers of his political course. For the sake of Turkey and the alliance, he should listen.

## CASH FOR ANSWERS

University funding should reflect research excellence

The days when only economics dons talked about money, have long since passed for Britain's universities. The issues of overall funding levels and the internal allocation between institutions now dominate academic life. The latest cash grants outlined by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) yesterday will doubtless spark further fury in the common rooms. These have weakened Turkey's influence in Washington and been used by the Greek lobby there to undermine Turkey's request for new weapons. As a result, Turkey is now subject to an undeclared weapons embargo. For the army, Nato is a source of strength

extent but not completely. Institutions that showed a dramatic improvement have had part of their increase "moderated": that is, their gain has been clawed back to subsidise those who were judged to have made little or no progress over the past four years. This has been explained by the claim that dramatic shifts in financial settlements would be unduly disruptive on those who found their resources cut. As a consequence, University College, London will receive nearly £1.7 million less than otherwise; Oxford University just over £1 million, and Imperial College, London, over £500,000.

Had that money been transferred to those institutions that recently switched from polytechnic status it might be justified. Many of these new bodies have not yet had the opportunity to develop their potential as research centres. The real beneficiaries from this policy decision, however, include the Universities of Exeter, Liverpool, London and Manchester, which could not be considered disadvantaged or less than established by any stretch of the imagination. This is a simple case of the rules being altered to assist those whose relative performance was less impressive. The principle of rewarding excellence has been diluted to restore equity.

There seems little point in obliging higher education to endure such assessment if the results are then rewritten. It discriminates against those who have made an effort to improve and undermines the entire exercise. After the 1992 enterprise some version of redistribution endured for three years. This time, HEFCE has pledged that the cross-subsidy will stay in place for 12 months only. If the council is serious in its stated aim of investing in world-class research then it will not last a moment longer.

## MODERN MEDICI

Patron of pickled cows moves to Piccadilly

The most powerful Renaissance patrons supported their personal aesthetic judgments with large fortunes. The artists profited, and so did their backers. In Britain today, patronage has revived, but much of it rests in the hands of just one man: Charles Saatchi. Mr Saatchi has contributed more to the international recognition of young British artists than any public institution. Now his collections are to reach a larger audience in a show at the Royal Academy.

Other rich Britons collect art, though the pursuit is nothing like as common here as it is in America or Germany. But Sir Denis Mahon, who has built up a great collection of 17th-century Italian paintings, and Lord Lloyd-Webber, who has amassed a large body of Pre-Raphaelite and other Victorian art, have not in the process helped living painters. A patron is more than a collector; by his financial support, he ensures that the art which he appreciates will flourish.

Mr Saatchi has been buying modern British art for nearly 30 years. He has built a gallery in Boundary Road where the annual show of young British artists regularly attracts between 50,000 and 75,000 visitors. In its first year, which was 1992, it included Damien Hirst and Rachel Whiteread, the enfant terribles of their generation. It is now seen as a barometer of success and fashion. The show is as much of an event as a big opening at the Tate. And where Mr

Saatchi leads, the subsidised galleries follow. In making himself an arbiter of taste, he has been criticised for making one-way bets, for backing and buying artworks from which he is bound to make money, whatever happens. Presumably, in the best traditions of his craft, he does make money from his patronage. Yet taste is a fickle thing; there are huge financial risks in being the only big player in a field that could easily be abandoned for another.

Mr Saatchi's taste is not shared by all; indeed it is excoriated by many who see in it only kudos for the sensation-seeking. Not everyone will be happy that his artists will be legitimised by such an august institution as the Royal Academy. But the question of whether pickled cows should qualify as art is for critics, not collectors. It is they who are supposed to be arbiters of artistic merit. And let other patrons, with other tastes, vie for the title of modern Medici.

The likes of Mr Hirst, Marc Quinn and Marcus Harvey have helped to make modern Britain celebrated around the world. The Royal Academy has caught the spirit of the times. Its Piccadilly galleries will be able to attract a more varied crowd than now makes the pilgrimage to Boundary Road. If people hate the work, so be it. And if Mr Saatchi increases the value of his collection by opening it up to wider view, good luck to him.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

### Investment 'crisis' of London's Tube

From the Chief Executive of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Sir, Among the increasing number of suggested solutions to London's Tube investment crisis (reports, February 26) is the theory, endorsed by Labour, that a strategic authority would provide an effective voice with which to argue for sufficient funding levels. History suggests differently, however.

According to London Transport's own figures, the investment backlog in 1988 stood at £2 billion at today's prices — that was just two years after the abolition of the Greater London Council. Since then, far from getting worse, the backlog has been whittled away to £1.2 billion.

A strategic body of some description, which London's business community would warmly welcome but for different reasons, is only part of the solution to the present problems. Other elements include the effective management of London Transport, which already exists, and the political determination to ensure adequate investment funding, which clearly does not.

Whether or not the Tube is eventually privatised, investors will be happy to invest in a network, provided a commercial rate of return is forthcoming. London certainly needs a strategic body, but not in order to recruit investors; rather, it needs one to promote and defend its interests, to coordinate public policy more generally, and to ensure that policymaking in London becomes more transparent.

To our competitors in other world cities it can seem ludicrous that a city of London's magnitude, responsible for producing one fifth of the UK's GDP, lacks an accountable, transparent and effective means of formulating and co-ordinating policy.

It is also ludicrous that London's Tube system, which you rightly describe as "this marvel of Victorian engineering" (leading article, February 24), is abandoned to dilapidation. But a new government structure for London is not sufficient in itself to ensure this. It needs political will too.

Yours faithfully,  
SIMON SPERVYN,  
Chief Executive, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry,  
33 Queen Street, EC4.  
February 26.

From Mr Ildyrd Harrington

Sir, It is really beyond belief that the Government, with Sir George Young cast once again as Pontius Pilate, is washing its capital investment failures away with a privatisation solution for London's Underground.

It has long been apparent, certainly to the City and its Lord Mayor, that for 60 years public investment and accountability proved to be a successful formula.

London now has the highest fares in Europe. No one can deny that the New York subway is cheaper and in many ways more reliable than London's.

A once-envied public utility should resume that role in the hands of local London government.

Yours faithfully,  
ILLTYD HARRINGTON  
(Deputy Leader, GLC, 1973-89).  
16 Lea House, Salisbury Street, NW8.  
February 25.

From Mr John Norton

Sir, As an American tourist in London on two occasions within the past year, I urge the powers that be to heed Peter Riddell's advice on February 24, "Mind the funding gap", and to find the funding needed for the Tube.

From a tourist's perspective, Tube transport is a national — or at least a London — treasure. There is no better way to gain an appreciation for the characters of the many Londoners that I have come to enjoy but never would have seen for Tube transit. By contrast, the New York subways are the absolute last place one would wish to consult a tourist to.

I hope that the rider of modest means — foreign or native — is not forgotten in any scheme to privatise the system and that the ingenious simplicity of a fairly complex system will be maintained. Thousands of us look forward to renewing our acquaintance with London via its wonderful Tube.

Yours etc,  
JOHN NORTON,  
9 East High Street,  
Annville, PA 17003.  
February 25.

Quite a quorum

From Mr Timothy M. Simon

Sir, Committees, in my experience, are a device invented to thwart decision-making and to provide people with a frequently undeserved forum; but the mind of even the most committed committee must have bogged at the size of the funeral committee established for Deng Xiaoping — 459 members (report, February 21).

I admit that it appears to have operated with an efficiency which many smaller committees would be proud to emulate, maybe in time-honoured fashion it spawned a sub-committee.

Yours faithfully,  
T. M. SIMON,  
2 New Square, WC2.  
February 25.

Business letters, page 27

### West Lothian question: flaws in the Ulster analogy

From Lord Blake, FBA

Sir, Lord Jenkins of Hillhead (letter, February 25), dealing with the "awkwardness" of the West Lothian question, concluded that on the analogy of Northern Ireland "it had better be accepted for Scotland (perhaps with some reduction in the number of Scottish seats at Westminster)".

Why "perhaps"? What possible justification could there be for Scotland to have both a devolved parliament in Edinburgh and 71 seats in Westminster when on a population basis it is entitled to only 57? Indeed, if the analogy of Northern Ireland is accepted, that a strategic authority would provide an effective voice with which to argue for sufficient funding levels. History suggests differently, however.

According to London Transport's own figures, the investment backlog in 1988 stood at £2 billion at today's prices — that was just two years after the abolition of the Greater London Council. Since then, far from getting worse, the backlog has been whittled away to £1.2 billion.

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To our competitors in other world cities it can seem ludicrous that a city of London's magnitude, responsible for producing one fifth of the UK's GDP, lacks an accountable, transparent and effective means of formulating and co-ordinating policy.

It is also ludicrous that London's Tube system, which you rightly describe as "this marvel of Victorian engineering" (leading article, February 24), is abandoned to dilapidation. But a new government structure for London is not sufficient in itself to ensure this. It needs political will too.

That is the State of Israel was at the time of Mr Vanunu's crime — and indeed remains — in a state of war with Syria, Iraq, Iran and Libya is beyond dispute. The threat of activating its nuclear deterrent was enough to cause the Syrians to halt their advance into Israel's northern territory during the 1973 October war. It may have played a part in dissuading the Iraqis from deploying chemical and biological warheads against Israel during

little of Ulster and cared less. He referred to discuss his plans seriously with members of his own party in the Province, and he dismissed unmistakable signs of widespread resistance in Northern Ireland as "momentary ebullitions, which will pass away with the fears from which they spring". Any devolution scheme for Ireland which included the majority of Ulster's Unionists could never have become practical politics, and Irish nationalists were not willing to contemplate partition seriously before 1912.

Opponents of a Scottish parliament with legislative and tax-raising powers can easily withstand arguments based on wishful thinking about Irish history. But, like Irish Unionists a century ago, they need constructive alternatives. Under this Government they have been able to develop their ideas much more fully than their predecessors, curbed by unimaginative English Tories, were ever in a position to do.

The Union between Scotland and the rest of the country has been transformed by Michael Forsyth's reforms. Local government in Scotland has been put on a more democratic basis (something, incidentally, that Gladstone in the early 1880s flatly refused to do in Ireland). Most importantly, a form of devolution has been found that avoids the West Lothian question and all other difficulties, through the expansion of the Scottish Grand Committee. It can meet anywhere in Scotland; it can deal with all Scottish legis-

lation; and it can call all ministers (not just Scottish Office ministers) to account.

This Government has reconciled devolution and Union.

Yours faithfully,  
ALISTAIR B. COOKE,  
Director,  
Conservative Political Centre,  
32 Smith Square, Westminster, SW1.  
February 25.

From Dr H. A. Will

Sir, Lord Jenkins's perceptive letter does not do justice to the logic of Joseph Chamberlain's position in 1886 on the question of Irish representation at Westminster.

Why Chamberlain finally came to regard that representation as crucial was because, in his view, it would open the way for a future federal relationship between England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland on the lines as he put it, of the relations between the Canadian provinces. That was his answer to the West Lothian question and to the wider and, for him, far more important question of preventing the ultimate separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom.

It is, whatever its practicality, the only logical constitutional settlement.

Yours faithfully,  
H. A. WILL,  
II Russell Avenue,  
Hartley, Plymouth, Devon.  
February 26.

### Two of a kind

From Mr Ian C. Boulton

Sir, Libby Purves takes a welcome step away from sensationalism in her comment on the cloning of Dolly the lamb ("Like a wolf on the fold", February 25), but she nonetheless asserts that "if we prefer the illusory control of cloning to the glorious gamble of life, we will be interfering with nature in a way far more arrogant and damaging than ever before".

By definition, cloned animals are genetically identical, but the prospect of such organisms being routinely found in agriculture is extremely remote. Farming is a highly competitive business and irrespective of the inevitable reduction in cloning costs, it seems unlikely that tried and tested methods of reproduction will ever be undersold.

Any form of selective breeding has the potential to reduce the available gene pool. Ms Purves's concerns would be more appropriate if directed against the practices of modern farming than the scientific community.

Yours faithfully,  
IAN C. BOULTON,  
Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital,  
Department of Biochemistry and  
Molecular Biology,  
London Bridge, SE1.  
February 25.

From Mr G. S. Marvin

Sir, The sub-heading on Libby Purves's article suggests that cloning of animals reduces diversity. This is not necessarily so in nature as a whole. At a different level dandelions have been cloning for thousands of years.

Clones are capable of hybridising and producing new genotypes, which may be regarded as "species". In Britain alone some 130 different species are now recognised (*Dandelions*, A.J. Richards, Botanical Society of the British Isles, 1973).

Yours etc,  
STANLEY MARVIN,  
8 Addenbrooke Road,  
Droitwich, Worcestershire.  
February 25.

From Mr John Kay

Sir, An Edinburgh genetics laboratory has apparently created, for the first time ever, a cloned sheep.

Having just returned from a visit to North Wales, I have to say I find it very difficult to believe their work is unique.

Yours sincerely,  
JOHN KAY,  
Hazelwell, Priory Road,  
West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside.  
February 27.

From Mr K. L. Rawling

Sir, Perhaps we should bear in mind the words attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Never try to make anyone like yourself — you know, and God knows, that one of you is sufficient."

Yours etc,  
K. L. RAWLING,  
10 Somerville Terrace,  
Otley, West Yorkshire.  
February 26.

From Mrs J. Hadfield

Sir, How correct was the BBC, in its news programme last night, to describe the cloned sheep as "unique"?

Yours faithfully



## COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE  
February 27: The Secretary-General of the United Nations called on The President of the State of Israel this morning.

Later The President and Mrs Weizman flew to Cambridge Airport and were received on arrival by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire (Mr James Crowden).

The President and Mrs Weizman drove to Cambridge University Library and were received by the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Alan Broadbent).

The President and Mrs Weizman later arrived at Royal Air Force Cranwell and were received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Lincolnshire (Mrs Bridget Craddock) and Air Commodore John Thorne, air Officer Commanding and Commandant Royal Air Force College Cranwell.

The President of the State of Israel and Mrs Reuma Weizman drove to Cambridge University Library and were received by the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Alan Broadbent).

The President and Mrs Weizman drove to Cambridge University Library and were received by the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Alan Broadbent).

The President and Mrs Weizman drove to the Directorate of Recruiting and Selection and Initial Officer Training (Royal Air Forces) and were given demonstrations of aptitude tests and hunger exercises.

The President afterwards visited Royal Air Force College Cranwell and, having been given a tour of the Chief of the Air Staff (Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon), addressed Air Officers in the Lecture Hall.

Mrs Weizman visited the College Community Centre.

The President of the State of Israel and Mrs Reuma Weizman were subsequently entertained to lunch by the Commandant.

The President afterwards planted a commemorative tree in Queen's Avenue and with Mrs Weizman viewed static aircraft and her personnel.

The President of the State of Israel and Mrs Reuma Weizman later visited the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 and were received by the Duke of Kent, President of the Imperial War Museum, and General Sir Christopher Channon, Field Marshal the Lord Bramall KCB.

The President and Mrs Weizman viewed exhibits and, having met members of the Jewish Community in Britain who have supported the project, His Excellency handed to The Duke of Kent items from a collection of Yom HaShoah in appreciation of a foundation contribution from the State of Israel to the Holocaust Exhibition.

His Excellency Mr A.H. Mahmood Ali was received in audience by The Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Commission as High Commissioner for the People's Republic of Bangladesh in London.

Mrs Ali was also received by Her Majesty.

Sir John Coles (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) was present.

Major Sir Fergus Matheson Matheson, Bt, was received by The Queen this morning and delivered up his Stick of Office to the Queen, St James's Palace.

The Prince of Wales afterwards attended a Reception for the local Bangladeshi community at the Sybil Club.

His Royal Highness, President, The Prince of Wales Business Leader Forum, later attended a Seminar on "Partners in Development" followed by a reception at the Sheraton Hotel, Didsbury.

The Prince of Wales this evening attended a State Banquet given by the Prime Minister.

KENSINGTON PALACE

February 27: The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester this evening attended a Banquet given by the President of the State of Israel and Mrs Reuma Weizman at Spencer House, St James's Place, London SW1.

YORK HOUSE

February 27: The Duke and Duchess of Kent this evening attended a Banquet given by the President of the State of Israel and Mrs Reuma Weizman at Spencer House, St James's Place, London SW1.

The President and Mrs Weizman, with the Israeli Ambassador, also attended the State Visit upon the conclusion of the State Visit to The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Senior Trustee, this morning attended a Meeting of the Trustees of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London SE10.

Colonel Sir Piers Bengough was received by The Queen upon his appointment as Standard Bearer of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms to Her Majesty the Queen.

The Lord Macaulay of Bearsden was received by The Queen with the insignia of a Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh, together with The President of the State of Israel and Mrs Reuma Weizman, attended a Dinner at Spencer House, St James's Place, London SW1.

John Minchiner, who was received in audience by The Queen on February 26, should have been accredited to the Republic of Armenia, not the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as stated in yesterday's Court Circular.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880  
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

**DEATHS**

GABBO - Mary Elizabeth, devoted teacher of English, died peacefully 20th January 1997, aged 80, in Guildford Cemetery.

CHAPMAN - John Henry Benjamin CB, MC, EDNA, son of Captain Chapman, aged 97. Much loved husband of the late Dorothy Chapman, died 12th March 1997, at his home, Beaulieu, Hampshire. Service 4pm Friday 7th March at St Mary's Church, Beaulieu. Family Friends and National Deaf Blind Association, c/o Munitions Director, 31 Grosvenor Road, Beaulieu.

COOMBS - Albert John, 25th February peacefully in Paisley, Hospice, Scotland. Burial Service at Little Springfield Church Thursday 6th March at 2.30pm.

DALEYMPLE - To Olivia and William, on Friday 21st February, 1pm, St Paul's, New Zealand.

EMERSON - On February 18th of The Portland Hospital, to Sean and Laura, a son, Colbie, and a daughter, Claire, brother and sister to Jon.

HOGG SMITH - 25th February 1997, in Hong Kong, to Kast and Peter, a daughter.

PINNINGTON - On February 24th 1997, to Monica and Andrew Pinnington, a son, James, a brother, Richard, a mother for Natalie.

SMITH - On February 20th at The Portland Hospital, to Luis and Mohamed, two sons, Ahmed and Jaber.

STEWART - The Portland Hospital, to Janine (née Hartwell) and Trevor, a daughter, Grace, a sister for Jordan Lake and Sam.

**DEATHS**

BURGESS - On February 22nd at home, Margaret Elizabeth aged 76, peacefully 19th February 1997, in Northgate, Croydon, Surrey. Dear loved mother of David and mother to Roger and Paula, sister of Pauline and Trevor. A fond mother and grandmother and friend to many. Funeral Services at All Saints Church, Croydon.

PIERS - On February 23rd at home, Mrs Jeanne, widow of John, father of Michael, died peacefully 20th February 1997, in Croydon. Dear wife of Michael, and mother of John, Michael, and Sophie. To Michael, "Katherine", Jonathan, James and Rebecca, and a friend of so many. Funeral Services at St John's Crematorium, Woking on Wednesday 5th March at 4.30 pm. Family flowers only. All kind donations to the British Heart Foundation may be sent c/o Bennett's Ltd, 120 High Street, Croydon. Further enquiries c/o A.W. Court Funeral Directors - tel: (01622) 850640.

JAMES - Harry, Teddron aged 26, died peacefully 19th February 1997, in his home aged 55. Much loved husband of Jean, father of Michael, and mother of Sophie. To Michael, "Katherine", Jonathan, James and Rebecca, and a friend of so many. Funeral Services at St John's Crematorium, Woking on Wednesday 5th March at 4.30 pm. Family flowers only. All kind donations to the British Heart Foundation may be sent c/o Anna Bentham & Son Funeral Directors, 71 St Giles Street, Northcote, NW1 1JF (tel: 01992) 842220.

## Memorial service

Sir James Connyn, QC  
The Lord Chancellor was represented by Ms Michelle Cole at a memorial service for Sir James Connyn, QC, held on Wednesday at the Temple Church. The Lord Chief Justice and the Master of the Rolls were present.

Canon Joseph Robinson, Master of the Temple, officiated, assisted by Father John Fordham, of Brompton Oratory.

Mr Justice Gaze read the lesson and His Honour Kenneth Wilcock, QC, gave an address.

The Treasures of the Middle Temple and the Treasures of the Inner Temple were present. Among others present were:

Canon Edward Sedgwick, Mr and Mrs Tony Connyn (son and daughter-in-law), Miss Kate Connyn (daughter), Dr Michael Connyn (son), Mr Richard Alderton, Mr Jonathan Alderton, Colonel Robert Chaudron, Mr Michael Chaudron, Lord Phillips, Lady Brandon of Oakham, Lord Nolan, Mr Michael Connyn (son), Mr David Wigoder, QC, Lady Justice Suder, Mr Justice Peter Smith, Mr Justice Ward, Lord Justice and Lady Hirst, Sir Ian Hirst, Mr Justice Peter Smith, Mr Justice Polster, Lord Justice Brooks, Sir Ralph Gibson, Lord Justice Brooke, Mr Justice Thorpe, Lord Justice Heldam.

Lady Harrison, Mr Justice Collins, Mr Justice and Lady Connell, Mr Justice Wilson, Mr Justice and Lady Holloman, Mr Justice and Lady Johnson, Mr Justice Harrison, Mr Justice Peter Smith, Mr Justice Mordant, Mr Justice Rougier, Mr Justice Jacob, Sir Donald Rumsby, Sir Ernest Rumbold, Lady Justice Sir Godfrey Le Quenne, QC, Lady Justice and Lady Anthony and Lady Elizabeth Beaumont.

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## NEWS

**Ulster deal to protect Major**

■ The Ulster Unionists threw John Major the lifeline that should keep him in power until May 1 after the Government agreed to increase the powers of the special parliamentary committee that monitors Northern Ireland.

The deal was announced by the Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, who made clear that he saw no point in trying to force an early election. Page 1

**Tebbit accuses 'tacky' Heseltine**

■ Michael Heseltine has been accused by a former Cabinet colleague of conduct that is "tasteless, tacky if not dishonourable and self-centred beyond even the call of his profession". In a withering attack on the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Tebbit cites as an example what he sees as Mr Heseltine's attempt to avoid National Service. Page 1

**Rugby defence**

A rugby union star who challenged his suspension won a court ruling that opens the way to similar actions against sporting bodies whose decisions affect players' livelihoods. Page 9

**Cloning inquiry**

Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, asked officials to investigate whether there was a need for joint action to regulate genetics. Page 2

**Jury challenge**

Michael Howard embarked on another confrontation with the legal profession by proposing curbs on the right to trial by jury and other changes to the criminal justice system. Page 4

**Open prisoner**

Valerio Viccei, the man behind the Knightsbridge safe deposit robbery, told how he swapped a cell at Parkhurst for a life of virtual freedom under the Italian prison system. Page 5

**Health costs**

A judge rejected accusations by the families of four haemophilic boys that health authorities had unlawfully refused to fund treatment with an expensive blood clotting agent. Page 6

**Education costs**

Leading universities will have to forfeit £12 million in grant to reduce cuts at less successful institutions. Page 8

**Flying visit down memory lane**

■ Ezer Weizman left home in Haifa in 1942 to join the RAF in Egypt. Yesterday the Israeli President returned as guest to RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire which he described as the pinnacle of his three-day visit to Britain. He could not resist pulling off his overcoat and climbing up to squeeze into the cockpit of a Hawk jet trainer. Page 1, 3



Diane Blood with her parents in London yesterday after she heard that she can take her husband's sperm abroad. Page 1

## BUSINESS

**Marks & Spencer**: Marks & Spencer plans to open £400 million of stores around the world over the next three years. Page 23

**Films**: Carlton Communications, the ITV company, has emerged as one of the leading contenders for Rank's film distribution business. Page 23

**Cost of demerging**: British Gas lost £571 million in its last full year of trading before demerging. Restructuring costs were blamed. Page 24

**Markets**: The FTSE 100 index rose 9.9 points to close at 4339.2. Meanwhile, sterling's trade-weighted index fell from 98.6 to 98.2 after it went down from \$1.638 to \$1.6275 and from DM2.7537 to DM2.7500. Page 26

**TV "corruption"**: France's leading television station, TF1, was caught up in corruption allegations as its chairman was charged with misuse of corporate funds. Page 14

**Royal debate**: The House of Orange, one of the most popular and placid monarchies in Europe, is facing a republican assault from a powerful group of Dutch businessmen and notables. Page 15

**Motorists**: Europe's leading television station, TF1, was caught up in corruption allegations as its chairman was charged with misuse of corporate funds. Page 14

**Weather by fax**: Dial 0236 followed by area number from your fax. Page 15

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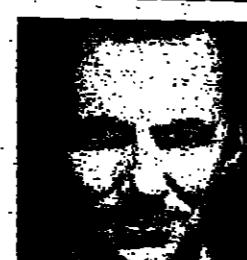
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

## M&S lays out plans for £400m overseas shops spree

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

MARKS & SPENCER is to open its largest franchise store next month and is planning an ambitious £400 million programme of store openings around the world over the next three years.

The new 31,000 sq ft Istanbul store is the second to be opened there and is four times the size of the existing store. It will open on March 21 and will be run by Turkpetrol Holdings, M&S's Turkish franchise partner.

Keth Oates, deputy chairman of Marks & Spencer, said: "We have really pressed the accelerator on overseas expansion. In Europe, new openings are likely in Luxembourg and Belgium, while in Germany, where the first Marks & Spencer store opened last year, Mr Oates foresees 20 to 30 stores, with one in each major city."

Openings and store expansions are also set to continue in the UK and, because it prefers to own the freehold on its UK stores, spending on expansion is set to remain higher in the UK than abroad.

Overseas, the company is studying the Latin American market. First openings there are likely to be in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru, followed possibly by Mexico. Taiwan is under consideration and, three years after deciding it was too expensive, a team has gone to Japan to look at possible sites. The company has also opened an office in Shanghai. But, Mr Oates said that it is keen not to move into China too soon, and not before customers have sufficient spending power.

Mr Oates, who last night delivered the annual UK Innovation Lecture, which is sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry, the Confederation of British Industry and others, told the audience that Marks & Spencer is likely to have 120 franchise stores in 32 countries in four years from now.

There are now 86 franchises in 24 countries. The company has recently announced plans to open franchises in the Arab Gulf and in Australia. The next wave of overseas openings is likely to comprise a mixture of franchises and company-owned stores.

In his speech last night, Mr Oates

said that franchising had been adopted because "globalisation of

reselling means that we wanted to expand abroad quickly, but we had to find the right way to be successful in difficult markets. We will eventually trade in Japan, China, India and Latin America but, for different reasons, in each case the timing has not been quite right yet."

Mr Oates said that Russia and former Soviet republics were not yet included in the overseas expansion plans. But he added: "We will in those places in ten or 15 years' time."

## Abbey National to table formal bid for ScotAm

By ROBERT MILLER  
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

ABBEY National, the retail high street bank that yesterday reported a 20 per cent rise in annual pre-tax profits to £1.3 billion, will today table its formal bid for Scottish Amicable, the mutual insurer.

Lord Tugendhat, chairman of the building society-turned bank, said: "We will be submitting a firm proposal. The next stage will be a discussion period, with final binding proposals to be submitted by a deadline in mid-March. An announcement is likely towards the end of March."

The Abbey chairman declined to say how much his bid was worth but it is believed that it has been raised from its initial sighting shot of £1.4 billion to nearer the rival offer from the Prudential of £1.9 billion. NatWest announced this week that it had withdrawn from bidding because the price was too high.

Abbey National, which lifted its final dividend to 17.4p, payable on May 6, to give a 20 per cent rise in the full-year payout to 26.1p, believes that its "Scottish" card could win the day and more than double its funds under management to £2 billion.

Peter Birch, chief executive of Abbey National, has already pledged that "no Scottish Amicable director will lose their seat on the board even if they oppose us". A similar promise was made – and kept – to Scottish Mutual directors when the Abbey acquired it in 1992. Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, is known to be taking a keen personal interest in the outcome of the ScotAm bid. If



Profitable partnership: Peter Birch, left, chief executive of Abbey National, and Lord Tugendhat, chairman, yesterday

the bid were to fail the Abbey indicated that it would look elsewhere and market speculation has it that its next target could be Norwich Union, which plans to make its stock market debut in the summer.

In 1996 the Abbey saw earnings per share increase by 16 per cent to 59.8p, but that was excluding the £61 million integration costs arising from last year's takeover of the National & Provincial Building Society (NPS). The target of driving up to half of the

group's profits from businesses outside of the core savings and loan market by the year 2000 continued on track at around 42 per cent. The consumer credit division chipped in, a 100 per cent profit increase at £96 million, while life assurance business was up 44 per cent to £151 million and Treasury and offshore managed an 18 per cent hike to £256 million.

On the more traditional front the Abbey increased the number of bank accounts by

about 113,000, to 1.6 million, and since the launch of its own-branded credit card in February last year has opened 115,000 accounts, added to which are some 331,000 former N&P accounts.

After the co-operation agreement signed last November with Safeway, UK's third-largest retailer, to give access to the supermarket's 6 million ABC loyalty card holders, the Abbey will next week launch a new initiative linked to Safeway's card holders. Lord

Tugendhat said: "This will be followed by a debit card, a credit card, and eventually by in-store banking. The arrangement will be a key factor in substantially increasing our market share of banking, credit and debit card customers by 1999."

The market has come to expect "solid" results from the Abbey and the shares closed up 4.2p last night, at 768p.

Pennington, page 25  
City Diary, page 27

## ABN Amro director admits offering a job to Horlick

By ROBERT MILLER

A SENIOR director of ABN Amro has confirmed that the Dutch bank approached Nicola Horlick, the former Morgan Grenfell fund manager, with a job offer.

Rijnhard van Tets, a member of the managing board of ABN Amro, which yesterday unveiled annual pre-tax profits up 25 per cent to £1.6 billion, is the first director to confirm formally that the bank held talks with Ms Horlick. However, he denied trying to poach Ms Horlick's team from Morgan Grenfell. Ms Horlick was suspended from her job last month amid allegations by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell that she breached her contract by trying to persuade her successful fund



team I am not a believer in poaching teams and I would never have done that. Nor would I try to disrupt their business."

Ms Horlick told *The Times* last night: "I did meet Rijnhard van Tets unexpectedly at the Lanesborough Hotel in London on the evening of Wednesday January 8. He basically said that he would like me to run the global asset management business of ABN Amro." The former Morgan Grenfell fund manager said Mr van Tets had been concerned because "he did not want to upset Deutsche Bank as he felt it could jeopardise the working relationship between the two banks after the introduction of a single European currency."

Carlton in running to buy Rank films

BY ERIC REGULY AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

CARLTON Communications, the ITV company, has emerged as one of the leading contenders for Rank's film distribution business.

Carlton would not confirm or deny that it was among the bidders for the business, which was officially placed on the auction block last week. But sources familiar with the sales effort said that Carlton, whose chairman is Michael Green, is in the running.

Analysts have predicted that the pricing could reach £100 million. But Rank has dampened expectations by pointing out that the rights to many of the more popular films in the library have already been sold. The business, which has a book value

of £22 million, could go for as little as £50 million.

The Rank catalogue is best known for the Ealing comedies and other classics, such as the original *The 39 Steps* and Lord Olivier's *Henry V*. Recent successes include *Strictly Ballroom* and *The Madness of King George III*.

Rank's film distribution business is expected to be sold by the late spring.

Analysts have predicted that the pricing could reach £100 million. But Rank has dampened expectations by pointing out that the rights to many of the more popular films in the library have already been sold. The business, which has a book value

## Societies Bill set to be law before election

By ROBERT MILLER

THE long-delayed Building Societies Bill is finally to be laid before Parliament today and is expected to become law before the general election.

With the backing of Mike O'Brien, Shadow Economic Secretary to the Treasury, the Bill, which will give building societies more freedom to expand into new areas such as general insurance, is expected to pass through the Commons unopposed.

Labour, however, will put forward an amendment to have a clause inserted on a two-year rule to discourage so-called "carpetbaggers" from making a quick profit should a society shed its mutual status and become a bank. Mr O'Brien said: "We want to stop mere speculators from benefiting from conversions and that is why we think only members of two or more years' standing should receive bonuses. On the question of conversion, that it a matter for members."

The most controversial clause in the Bill, put forward by Angela Knight, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, concerns the five-year protection afforded to societies that be-

come public companies. The new Bill will remove that protection, but only if a new bank makes a takeover bid for "any authorised financial institution".

Christopher Rodrigues, the chief executive of the Bradford & Bingley, which welcomed the Bill, said: "We do not see why converted societies should enjoy a protection which no other public company is afforded."

Brian Davis, the chief executive of the Nationwide, which is soon to become the United Kingdom's largest building society, said: "When it becomes law, the new Building Societies Act will benefit millions of customers."

"It will enable Nationwide, and all other building societies committed to remaining mutual, to continue to provide strong competition which benefits consumers."

Mr Davis added: "Importantly, it will also remove the unfair anomaly which currently allows the converting societies to embark upon an aggressive acquisition programme, whilst at the same time protecting them from takeover for five years."

B & W payout, page 24

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## RTZ-CRA harks back to Rio Tinto roots

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE  
IN SYDNEY

RTZ-CRA is turning the clock back more than 100 years in the quest for a new corporate identity. The mining company is seeking shareholders' permission to change its name back to Rio Tinto, a name first used in 1873.

Rio Tinto, or red-wine coloured river,

was floated on the London Stock

Exchange in 1873 to acquire and redevelop the ancient Rio Tinto copper mines in southern Spain.

The present dual-listed structure of RTZ-CRA, resulting from the 1995 merger, will be maximised but Rio Tinto will become the name for the unified group. The name change, however, met with outrage in Australia's financial community which regarded it as another example of RTZ ex-

erting its influence over CRA, which has its roots as Compania Rio Tinto de Austral formed in 1962 from the merger of Consolidated Zinc and the Rio Tinto Mining Company of Australia.

One analyst said: "People will see

this as another indication that RTZ is

flexing its muscle and it will fuel the

belief that the merger was really just a

disguised back door takeover of CRA

by RTZ."

Tempus, page 26

\*Source: Mercer. Performance figures based on selling price to 32.97 with gross income reinvested. 5 year performance £12,945, an average annual return of 16.4%. 2% discount on the buying price of units in the Fund on investments of £1,000 or more in the Mercury 1988 PEP. \*\*The Mercury European Growth PEP is managed by Mercury Asset Management plc, which is regulated by MIRO. It invests in the Mercury European Growth Fund, a unit trust managed by Mercury Fund Managers Ltd regulated by MIRO and the Personal Investment Authority. The PEP is issued by Mercury Investment Services Ltd, 33 King William Street, London EC4R 9AS, which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and represents only the Mercury Marketing Group and its packaged products which include unit trusts, PEPs and pension schemes. \*\*\*Remember that the value of investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise and you may not get back the amount you invested. \*\*Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. \*\*\*Changes in exchange rates may cause the value of investments to fluctuate. \*\*\*\*The tax treatment of PEPs may be changed by future legislation. \*\*\*\*For your protection, telephone calls are usually recorded.

الإمارات

## Investors in B&W to get £1,100

BY CAROLINE MERRELL

**SAVERS** with the Bristol & West Building Society for more than two years will get a cash payout worth an average £1,100 under the terms of the £600 million takeover by the Bank of Ireland.

Borrowers and those who have been savers for less than two years will get 250 preference shares, estimated to be worth £1 each. The deal, announced on April 14 last year, is expected to go through on July 28 — "vesting day".

Details of the takeover will be mailed to the society's one million members on March 7. Two-year savers are those who had £100 in their accounts on April 14, 1996, and who will hold an account continuously from December 31, 1994, until the day before vesting day.

Those that benefit from the preference shares will have access to a free share-dealing facility in the six weeks after the completion of the deal.

The cash will be equivalent to 6.5 per cent of the lower of the two balances on April 14, 1996, and June 25, 1997, and any other day from yesterday until vesting day. A special meeting will be held on April 15 at the Royal Bath & West of England Society Showground, Shepton Mallet.

### TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.20	2.04
Austria Sch	20.33	18.63
Bulgaria Ft	1.25	1.20
Cambodia Riel	2.237	2.177
Cyprus Cyp	0.855	0.800
Denmark Kr	11.05	10.28
Egypt L	1.77	1.72
France Fr	9.67	9.02
Germany Dm	2.50	2.68
Greece Dr	1.42	1.42
Hong Kong \$	1.27	1.27
Ireland P	1.08	1.00
Japan Yen	5.74	5.00
Italy Lira	1.25	1.20
Japan Yen	211.50	165.50
Malta	0.650	0.605
New Zealand \$	3.50	3.50
Norway Kr	2.50	2.58
Norway Kr	11.48	10.80
Portugal Esc	267.00	260.00
Spain Pts	1.24	1.20
Spain Pts	244.00	227.00
Sweden Kr	12.50	12.00
Switzerland Fr	1.25	1.20
Taiwan Lira	204.00	192.00
USA \$	1.730	1.600

Rates for small denomination bank notes only are supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



Richard Giordano, chairman of the recently demerged British Gas which ended its trading life in the red.

## British Gas signs off with final-year losses of £571m

BY OLIVER AUGUST

BRITISH GAS lost more than £500 million in 1996, its final year as a single entity. At the last official function of the now demerged group, Richard Giordano, the chairman, blamed restructuring costs for turning a £130 million pre-tax profit last year into a £571 million loss.

The group was plunged into the red by exceptional charges totalling more than £1 billion in the year to December 31. The renegotiation of two take-or-pay contracts and the losses on long-term gas sales deals accounted for £635 million.

Restructuring prior to demerger, which included halving the workforce to 35,000, cost £242 million.

Mr Giordano also acknowledged that the group had to launch a costly fightback against "a fall in our customer service level in the last 18 months". British Gas was overwhelmed by much of last year by customer complaints about billings and cut-offs.

This month, British Gas demerged its gas supply business into a new company, Centrica, and changed the name of its remaining gas

transport and storage business to BG. Centrica had a pro forma loss of £1 billion last year and BG made a profit of £381 million.

British Gas shareholders will receive an unchanged dividend of 14.5p a share, due on July 2, but Mr Giordano gave warning that the dividend level is certain to come down over the next few years.

Earnings per share of 2.9p last year turned into losses per share of 13p, and in the fourth quarter pre-tax losses amounted to £379 million, compared with a profit of £55 million in

the same period last year. The 1996 results would have been worse if the excessively cold weather had not helped to increase sales. Prices in the commercial and industrial markets are said to be weak.

The group declined to give estimates of expected future losses resulting from the renegotiation of further take-or-pay contracts. It said that talks with the counterparties in those contracts are continuing but no resolution is expected until the end of this year.

BG is now gearing up for a Monopolies and Mergers Commission review, scheduled for April, into the new gas-pricing formula proposed by Ofgas, the industry regulator.

Philip Hampton, finance director, said: "We have no firm indication that there is any reason for advancement or delay. We're still working on the assumption that it will hit its timetable."

The politically sensitive review could be delayed until May when the general election will have taken place.

## Warning by CBI on Britain's EMU line

BY PHILIP BASSETT  
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITISH business may be at risk if "Europhobia" on a single currency damages UK firms' access to European markets, the Confederation of British Industry will say today.

The message comes after warnings from a number of companies, including British Aerospace, Unilever and Toyota, over Britain detaching itself from Europe over economic and monetary union.

While business remains undecided about whether Britain should join a single currency, UK companies, especially exporters, believe no step should be taken that would damage their ability to operate in the EU single market.

Adair Turner, CBI Director-General, will tell business leaders that the UK needs a prosperous Europe in which it can flourish economically. He will say: "We cannot afford to let Europhobia rule."

Speaking at a business breakfast in Cardiff, Mr Turner will say that if Britain decides not to be part of the first wave of EMU, the tone it strikes will be crucial.

If, even after deciding not to join a single currency early, Britain takes a "positive approach" to it and genuinely keeps open the option of joining subsequently, then UK firms' access to the single market is unlikely to be affected.

"But if we stay out amid triumphalist assertions of our superiority and against a background of a wider Europhobia, rubbing our hands with glee at Europe's problems, we could risk isolation."

To do that would see Britain's views go unheeded, and its influence diminish. "Ultimately, our access to the single market could be at risk — to our enormous economic disadvantage."

Although CBI leaders have been attacked by Conservative Eurosceptics for being too pro-Europe, Mr Turner will emphasise the benefits EU membership brings to business. He will point out that rather than Europe being an "economic disaster", income per head in Europe has grown faster than that in the US for the past 20 years and Europe's export performance remains strong.

## Railway firm to cut jobs, say protesters

A PRIVATISED rail company plans to lay off about 1,400 staff at the two passenger rail franchises that it was awarded during privatisation, it was claimed yesterday. Campaigners against the sell-off said that MTL Trust Holdings, a bus company based in Liverpool, would cut more than 1,000 jobs from Regional Railways North East (RRNE), about 40 per cent of the workforce, and 350 from Merseyrail. Save Our Railways, a public transport pressure group that received leaked extracts from MTL's bid documentation revealing the planned redundancies, said that the cuts "would leave the railway horrendously understaffed".

MTL, which is to take over the RRNE franchise on Sunday, said that it was too early for it to comment on the exact numbers of jobs that would be lost, but it admitted that "by the end of the franchise term there will be a reduction in the level of staffing".

### Partco drives ahead

PARTCO, the car parts distribution group, is paying £103 million for Brown Brothers, the UK's leading supplier of paint to car bodyshops, which it is funding in part by a rights issue that will raise £68.8 million. Partco also announced annual pre-tax profits of £10.4 million, or £1.6 million before restructuring costs, up from £7.5 million. Underlying earnings rose 22.3 per cent to 22.5p a share. A final dividend of 5.5p, due on May 30, makes a total of 8p, up 14.3 per cent.

Tempus, page 26

### Icahn out of Nabisco

CARL ICAHN, the US investor, has raised about \$731 million with the sale of his share in RJR Nabisco and has apparently abandoned his year-long effort to break up the food and tobacco company. Mr Icahn unloaded his stake of 19.9 million shares at \$36.5 a share, in a sale brokered by Goldman Sachs. The stake was equal to about 7.3 per cent of RJR Nabisco, whose products include Winston and Salem cigarettes, Ritz crackers and Lifesavers candy.

### ITT to expand hotels

ITT CORP, seeking to thwart a hostile \$6.5 billion bid from Hilton Hotels Corp, has announced plans to add 28 hotels to its core Sheraton business. The move was the second by ITT since it rejected Hilton's offer earlier this month and said it may sell non-core assets to focus on hotel and casino operations. ITT has sold nearly half its 5 per cent stake in Alcatel Alsthom, the French telecommunications company and is expected to sell its 50 per cent stake in the Madison Square Garden properties.

### Whessoe bid success

THE joint Norwegian and Swiss break-up bid for Whessoe, the instrumentation company, headed towards victory yesterday when Siebe, the engineering group, said it would not increase its £46 million offer. Navia of Norway and Endress & Hauser of Switzerland, which are bidding £52.6 million, bought a further 4.44 million shares to lift their stake in Whessoe to 25.6 per cent. Siebe said it could not justify lifting its offer of 155p a share. Whessoe is expected to back the 175p from Navia and E&H.

### Citicorp bonus is cut

JOHN REED, chairman of Citicorp, the US merchant bank, saw his bonus cut to \$2 billion in 1996, from \$3 billion in each of the two previous years. The annual report shows that his basic pay rose to \$1.5 million in 1996, from \$1.30 million in 1995 and \$1.28 million in 1994. His 1996 bonus was 75 per cent cash, with the rest in shares. Mr Reed exercised options to buy 679,000 shares in 1996, with \$40.1 million in "value realised", the market value of common stock acquired minus exercise price.

### Akzo considers offer

AKZONOBEL, the diversified Dutch chemicals company, said yesterday that it was considering making an offer for Unichema International and Crosfield, two of the four specialised chemicals businesses offered for sale by Unilever. Akzo was reporting 1996 net profits little changed at £32 billion guilder (about £427 million) on sales up 4 per cent to £22.4 billion guilder. The company said higher profits in pharmaceuticals and coatings were offset by falls in chemicals and fibres.

### Linotype-Hell merges

ONE of the oldest names in the British printing industry is to disappear with the loss of nearly 100 jobs. Linotype-Hell, of Cheltenham, Gloucester, is to merge with Heidelberg Graphic Equipment, the German printing machine company that acquired a controlling interest last November. Linotype operations are to move to Heidelberg's UK headquarters in Brentford, west London, and to its offices in Tamworth and Leeds. Most of the job losses will be at Cheltenham.

### BTP acquisition

BTP, the UK chemicals group, has agreed to acquire PCR, a fine chemicals manufacturer, from Harris Specialty Chemicals Inc for \$72.3 million. PCR specialises in organosilicon and fluorine chemistry, and provides specific manufacturing capabilities and a range of fine chemicals. PCR's manufacturing facilities are based in Florida and Puerto Rico. PCR earned operating profits of \$6.3 million. PCR will be integrated into BTP's biocides and fine chemicals division.

### Memory's loss deepens

MEMORY CORPORATION, the memory chip producer, has done a deal with Sumitomo of Japan to help it to escape the volatile microchip market. Memory, which is switching from selling repaired dram microchips to licensing technology for repairs, said that Sumitomo will arrange at least two licensing contracts a year from 1998. Memory made a £4.5 million pre-tax loss last year (£1.95 million loss previously) after a collapse in the price of perfect chips hit the market for repaired ones.

British raise £2 venture

Liberty plan expand port

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## Bundesbank chief warns on wrong signal for union

BY OLIVER AUGUST

THE Bundesbank, in its most sceptical note on monetary union in months, yesterday said Europe has not escaped the vicious circle of excessive government debt and upward pressure on interest rates.

Hans Tietmeyer, Bundesbank president, said most countries were still hammed by debts and deficits, threatening stability of the single currency. He said: "The vicious circle of indebtedness and higher interest rate burdens are crowding out other tasks and lead to ever higher taxes."

Speaking in front of lawmakers at Goldman Sachs, he said the single currency had yet to win confidence. An easing of the fiscal requirements for monetary union membership would "send the wrong signal" and would create the illusion that the current state of public finances was acceptable.

Hans Tietmeyer agreed European exchange rates had become more stable but insisted the existing institutional structures set out in the Maastricht treaty were not sufficient to prevent a resurgence of inflation.

He acknowledged that however independent central bankers are still subject to public pressures. He said:

"Therefore it is necessary that finance ministers in all member countries regain control over their budgets and commit themselves to achieving stability."



Tietmeyer: sceptical

### Castle consortium planning to tower over rivals

## BBC transmitters in new hands

BY ERIC REGULY

CASTLE Transmission Services, the group that is to be confirmed today as new owner of the BBC transmitter network, will use the acquisition as a springboard for media infrastructure developments worldwide. It also plans to spend as much as £200 million on upgrading the service for digital terrestrial TV.

In its first privatisation, the BBC sold the system, which transmits all of the BBC's radio and TV signals, for more than £240 million. Strong competition from bidders, including Securicor, Mercury Asset Management and NTL, the owner of the ITV companies' transmission network, ensured that the price was higher than expected.

Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage

Secretary, said at a media conference yesterday that the proceeds from the sale will be used by the BBC to launch digital TV services, giving the viewer the choice of dozens of channels.

Castle Transmission is a consortium of Castle Tower, a transmission tower construction company in America, Berkshire Partners, a Boston investment firm, Candover Investments of Britain, and France Telecom. Ted Miller, 45, the millionaire Texan who is chief executive of Castle Tower, is to become chief executive of the British company.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP  
way firm to cut  
say protesters

THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

RK BUSINESS NEWS 25

□ Long silence over Mirror flotation inquiry □ Integrity checks out at Safeway □ Not much profit in prudence for the Abbey

## Unasked Maxwell questions

AS A MAN who appears so regularly on television, Michael Heseltine knows a thing or two about cosmetic exercises. This is what he was accused of performing when, as President of the Board of Trade, he appointed inspectors to investigate the flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers. Now, more than four and a half years later, and assuming, for a moment, a Labour election victory, there seems to be little chance of this report being completed while Mr Heseltine is still a member of Her Majesty's Government, never mind published.

But one could ask Hezza's successor, Ian Lang, what on earth is going on. The investigation was launched seven months after Robert Maxwell's death in November 1991 and in the teeth of a Serious Fraud Office investigation that everyone knew would lead to prosecutions. So clearly a report could not be published while the court case was outstanding.

It is now more than four months since everyone accused walked free at the end of the trial, yet there still seems to be no progress. Usually, draft criticisms are sent to those being investigated by the inspectors. Although something approaching that happened about a year ago, those who received the rambling conclusions have

heard nothing since. Perhaps the inspectors want to do a little more research; they now hope to question those whom judge and jury have cleared. It appears that Kevin Maxwell is now about to be questioned. Up to now, the inspectors may have been little nervous about approaching him, because he has shown an adept knowledge of both the legal system and the art of publicity.

No doubt he has scrutinised the European Court of Human Rights' ruling on the Ernest Saunders case to make sure just what the DTI's men can and cannot force him to disclose. But you clearly have no chance of completing an authoritative report into the Mirror float without speaking to the one living person who knew most about how the Maxwell empire worked — or did not.

So far, the investigation into the Maxwell case has found no one guilty of criminal charges, no one guilty of misleading the market over the share support operation and no one guilty of failing to disclose vital information about how much of a mess Maxwell was in.

At present, Mirror shares stand 60 per cent above the float price. The pensioners swindled by Maxwell have had their pensions guaranteed in full — those that did not die beforehand. A small number of very unfortunate victims of various legal loopholes have lost out financially; the damage was mainly absorbed by the big City

system and the art of publicity.

Perhaps the DTI has reasoned that there is no case to answer? In which case the Maxwell affair will turn out to be that *rara avis*, a crime with lots of victims, most of whom were compensated, but no perpetrators.

### Honest day's shopping

NEVER let it be said that this column only brings bad news. We now provide statistical proof to restore one's faith in human nature. People are honest.

The proof comes from Safeway, well ahead of its rivals in allowing customers to check off the goods in their trolleys themselves rather than queuing for a



next time, this information being registered on their loyalty card, and if they are consistently underpaying they can expect to be told to shop elsewhere. But they will not be prosecuted for shoplifting, Safeway making the assumption that they have made an honest mistake.

Cynics might expect that random checks would turn up a larger number of people with trolleys worth more than the tallies on their gizmos, that is, about to be undercharged, than with less and so in danger of overpaying. That was the suggestion from other food retailers, some of who are now experimenting with systems of their own while Safeway rolls the gizmo out in more stores.

This is presented at the checkout, and the customer pays the total registered. The opportunities for shoplifting are obvious: an undeclared bottle of Scotch or joint of meat can take a hefty percentage of the weekly shopping bill. So Safeway institutes random checks, a little like that occasional tap on the shoulder that used to trouble you when you went through the green channel at Customs.

Anyone whose bills are out of line with the contents of their trolley can expect to be checked

— a bit like most other forms of crime, come to think of it. But the huge majority of people are still honest. Enjoy your day.

### Getting rid of one Abbey habit

ALMOST through the banks' reporting season, and a bumpy ride it has been. Two of the biggest, NatWest and Barclays, saw sharp, and not always justified, share price falls. The market may not have fallen out of love with the sector, but it is certainly becoming more choosy.

Those analysts not worried about bad loans if the economy slows are worried about the threat from the supermarkets. Now Abbey National, whose own figures for 1996 received a grudging thumbs up from the market yesterday, wants more than half of profits to come from non-traditional sources by the end of the decade, even if Scottish Amicable slips in its grasp. Last year these operations, including insurance, consumer credit, treasury and offshore businesses, managed 40 per

cent, so the plan seems achievable. It is also understandable once you look at the Abbey's traditional business of lending on mortgages.

This ever-so-prudent business managed to raise net lending, stripping out the extra business gained by the National & Provincial, by just 2.4 per cent. The company claims to be moving away from discounted mortgages while cutting out cashbacks for customers who are remortgaging, only using this largely discredited perk to gain new business. But the cost of mortgage discounts and cashbacks still doubled to £187 million between 1995 and 1996. So much for prudence.

### Back to the future

THE pendulum swings, and swings back again. Just as the British Gas name disappears in favour of a brutalised BG, so KITZ is reborn in all its glory as Rio Tinto. Could this be the start of a trend? WPP ad men might not take to being rebranded as Wire & Plastic Products, but could British Oxygen Corporation again ply its trade untruncated? Imperial Chemical Industries may be politically incorrect, but why not London & Scottish Marine Oil? Could we please, please have back British Insulated Callender's Cables?

## British Land to raise £220m for venture with GUS

By CARL MORTISHED

BRITISH LAND is raising £220 million in a share issue to fund its investment in a billion pound retail property joint venture with Great Universal Stores.

The property group, run by John Ebbat, is spending £200 million for a half interest in a portfolio of high street shops currently owned by GUS and valued at £960 million.

The joint venture is to be financed with £400 million of equity and £560 million of debt but, for a period of about a year, GUS is financing the

venture by taking a £500 million loan note in return for injecting the properties into the joint venture. On completion the retailer will also be paid £200 million by British Land for its share of the equity. Funding will be sought from banks on a non-recourse basis to repay the GUS loan in due course.

GUS will receive interest on the loan and the joint venture agreement ensures that the retailer's property income in the first year will be equivalent to that of the previous year.

The GUS properties, which are mainly freehold, comprise several shopping centres, including The Forge in Glasgow and the St Nicholas Centre in Aberdeen, as well as some offices, but 77 per cent of the portfolio is high street shops spread across the country.

The GUS portfolio will substantially boost British Land's retail portfolio, which is currently biased towards food superstores.

John Weston Smith, finance director of British Land, said that a number of the properties would be sold and that performance could be improved by trading, buying in freeholds and selling sites to occupiers.

"High street shops are very much a growth area. With restrictions on out-of-town planning we think that this is a good place to invest," he said.

British Land is issuing 42.8 million shares at 520p each in a vendor placing to institutions. The joint venture has no time limit but British Land pointed out that the subordinated debt has a seven-year life. Each party has a right of first refusal if the other wishes to sell its interest in the joint venture.

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## Liberty plans to expand portfolio

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

LIBERTY International, the South African-controlled investment and shopping centre group, increased profits 7 per cent to £100 million in 1996 and said it would consider making acquisitions "if we find the right opportunity".

However, David Fischel, managing director, said he felt "under no pressure to go out and spend money" to increase the financial services division, even though the parent company had £380 million cash.

He said it had been "a transitional year" for the group known formerly as

Transatlantic Holdings. Donald Gordon, the chairman, said the shopping centres were benefiting from "a number of favourable social trends".

Earnings per share, before exceptional, increased 13 per cent to 19.77p (17.56p).

On reduced capital after the repurchase and cancellation of 40 million shares in 1995 at 320p each, the dividend has been increased 10 per cent to 16p and total shareholders' funds are £2.1 billion.

The net asset value increased 16 per cent to 436p (375p) or 445p (395p) on a fully diluted basis.



Sitting more comfortably: Nigel Potter, finance director, left, Claes Hultman and Alan Coppin, chief executive

## Euro 96 brings a final to Wembley

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE SUCCESS of the European football championships helped Wembley to return to profit last year, ensuring the company can pay its first dividend for four years. The leisure company reported full-year pre-tax profits of £17.1 million (£8.1 million loss).

Wembley completed the restructuring of its balance sheet and renegotiated buying facilities at the end of last year, enabling payment of a 2p final dividend.

Claes Hultman, chairman, said the company is working with football, rugby league and athletics authorities to complete financial and planning arrangements to redevelop the Wembley site as the new national stadium.

The redevelopment is expected to cost around £200 million, with £120 million from a lottery grant. Wembley suggested previously it would place the stadium into a trust and operate the facilities, although the company said yesterday that no final decision on the stadium's ownership had been taken.

Profits from the Wembley complex rose 54 per cent to £41.1 million. US racetrack profits rose 35 per cent to £13.9 million because of the success of video lottery terminals at Rhode Island. Wembley has attracted the Denver Foxes American football team to its Mile High greyhound stadium, ensuring better use of facilities.

But profits from UK greyhound racing fell to £2.5 million affected by the National Lottery. Keith Prowse, hospitality profits rose to £500,000. Wembley continued to cut debt and gearing fell to 27 per cent (42 per cent).

## Glenmorangie buys distillery from Allied

ALLIED DOMECQ, the drinks company, yesterday sold its Ardbeg whisky distillery to Glenmorangie for £7 million (Alasdair Murray writes).

Allied is selling the Ardbeg brand and maturing whisky stocks along with the Islay distillery. The company said it had made the disposal to concentrate its resources on its core brands, which include Ballantine's and Teacher's, as well as Laphroaig, its main Islay malt.

Glenmorangie said that the purchase would strengthen its portfolio of malts, which include Glenmorangie and Glen Moray. The company is aiming to regenerate the brand through an intensified marketing campaign.

## Charlton tactic is to sell players

By JASON NISSE

RICHARD MURRAY, chairman of Charlton Athletic, said that the first division football club will sell players to sustain profits after floating on the Alternative Investment Market with a market value of £17.4 million.

The club, of which Michael Grade is a non-executive director, is to raise £6.5 million to complete the rebuilding of its home at The Valley, and will make profits this year only because of the £2.8 million sale of Lee Bowyer to Leeds United.

Mr Murray said that the best Charlton can hope for is to be a "yo-yo" club, winning promotion in the Premiership through an intensified marketing campaign.

## Whitbread shakes up leisure side

DAVID THOMAS, chief executive designate at Whitbread, launched his first big shake-up at the company yesterday — restructuring the leisure division into five units (Alasdair Murray writes).

The restaurant division, which will include Pelican, BrightReasons, Pizza Hut, TGI Friday's and Costa Coffee, will be headed by Richard Sampson.

Alan Parker will be managing director of the Whitbread Hotel company, which includes the Marriott and Travel Inn brands.

The Beehive Restaurant & Pub chain will be run by Simon Wood, while Jerry Walton will be managing director of Thrasher, the off licence. Steve Philpot will continue as managing director of the David Lloyd Leisure chain.

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## STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

# Investors shrug off US interest rate worries

IT WAS business as usual for investors on the London stock market as they shrugged off worries about a possible rise in US interest rates.

They were no doubt encouraged by the performance of the Dow Jones industrial average overnight, which halved an earlier 120-point fall. Prices in London closed at their best of the day with the FT-SE 100 index up 9.9 points at 4,339.2. A total of 800 million shares were traded.

A program trade was recorded late in the session, with several large lines of stock going through the market. It included 1.2 million Smith-Kline Beecham at 919p as the price rose 9p to 923.5p and 4.75 million Prudential Corporation at 566.5p as the price closed 4.5p dearer at 572.5p.

The big rise in the dividend of the back of a near doubling of profits lifted Lsmo 7p to 246p. But Société Générale Strauss Turnbull told clients to take profits and Credit Lyonnais Laing urged a switch into Enterprise Oil, 10p better at 629p.

There was further heavy turnover in Pilkington as the price rose 3p to 142.5p and 3.6 million shares changed hands. A line of 500,000 shares went through at 142p leading to suggestions that a large buyer may be stalking Britain's biggest glass producer. Bid speculation also helped Reed International to a rise of 22.5p to 611.50 as turnover reached 1.46 million shares in this market.

It was a day of mixed fortunes for the banking sector, with Bank of Scotland falling 14.5p to 341p after warning that profits from WestBank, its 51 per cent owned Australian subsidiary, would fall short of forecast. NatWest Bank was also a weak market, losing 15p at 759p ahead of going ex the 19.4p net dividend on Monday.

A solid performance from the life and pensions operations of Abbey National helped it to post a solid performance last year. The group reassured brokers that it would not pay over the odds for Scottish Amicable. The shares rose 4.5p at 763p.

Standard Chartered continued to reflect on Wednesday's profit numbers with a jump of 32p to 815.5p. NatWest Securities, the broker, is telling clients to add to their holdings, while Nikko rates the shares a long-term buy.



Ray Nethercott saw Allied Carpets share price slip

British Land, the property developer, eased 2.5p to 539.5p as it placed a total of 42.5 million shares at 520p. The proceeds will be used to fund a fall of 10p at 242p after Merrill Lynch, the broker, urged clients to reduce their holdings.

It has also cut its forecast in the paper group for the current year by £15 million to £85 million and for 1998 by £20 million to £115 million. Hopes

now put a break-up value on Racal of 386p a share.

David S Smith, a takeover favourite, was left nursing a joint 1.60 million pound property venture with Great Universal Stores. British Land is paying GUS 4.5p dearer at 666p. £200 million for its stake in the venture. Racal Electronic rose 4p to

shares in Allied Carpets, of which Ray Nethercott is managing director, fell 1.5p to 280p as Cirven, the venture capitalist that arranged the original buyout of Carpetland in 1991, disposed of its 10 per cent holding. The shares were placed by ABN Amro Hoare Govett with institutions at a price of about 275p.

292p as brokers decided to revise its break-up value. It follows the merger announced overnight in the US between Freecom and US Biotics, two data companies. Brokers in London say the merger helps to crystallise the value of Racal's data interests, making the prospect of a break-up situation all the more feasible. Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, has hit

of an auction developing in the battle for control of Whessoe proved short-lived. Siebe, 3.5p dearer at 968.5p, has said it will not be increasing the terms of its 1.55p a share offer. It follows a higher offer of 175p a share from Navia, of Norway, and Endress & Hauser, a Swiss company. Whessoe was unchanged at 175p.

The slowdown in sales of personal computers has hit

Memory Corporation, where losses last year grew from \$1.95 million to \$4.5 million. The price fell 7p to 45.5p.

Pace Micro Technology slipped another 1p to 85p, stretching the loss of the past two days to 72p. It follows the group's second profits warning in less than a month and the departure of the chief executive.

It was the first day of trading for a clutch of new companies. Nord Anglia Education Group was placed at 140p and opened at 157p. The price touched a peak of 166.5p before closing at 164.5p, a premium of 24.5p. Flowie Holdings made its debut opening just 1p higher following a placing at 28p. The price closed at 30p, a premium of 2p.

Hanover International, the hotelier, was steady at 150p. Whispers in the Square Mile suggest the group is poised to make a sizeable acquisition.

Wederburn Securities, the property developer that is listed on the AIM, was suspended at 24.5p. It has agreed to acquire an oil trading company. Trading in the shares has been frozen until the deal can be finalised.

□ GILT-EDGED: There was a sharp flattening of the yield curve as shorter-dated issues remained overshadowed by comments from Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, about US interest rates.

Prices made a cautious start and were in danger of accelerating the losses after publication of worse than expected US durable goods numbers. But perversely, investors saw this as an opportunity to buy the market. The best gains were seen among longer-dated issues where rises of about 1% were commonplace.

In the futures pit, the March series of the Long Gil put on 1% to close at £113.52. The total number of contracts completed grew to 120,000 as investors continued to roll over open positions in March to the June series. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 put on 1% to £106.52, while among the shorts, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 could muster only a rise of three ticks to £104.16.

□ NEW YORK: Wall Street shares were little changed in late morning trading. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 11.54 points at 6,971.64.

Source: Datamann

**STANDARD CHARTERED: LONG-TERM BUY**

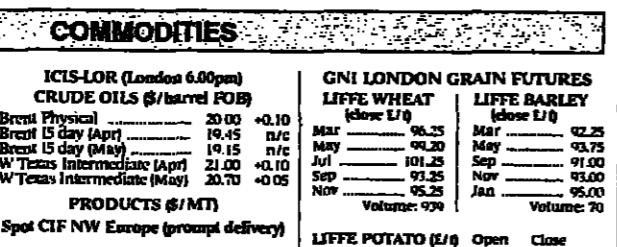
Source: Datamann

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

Standard Chartered

Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb

Closing Prices Page 23



REED INTERNATIONAL: LONG-TERM BUY

Source: Datamann

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

Reed International

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Closing Prices Page 23

Source: Datamann

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

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Reed International

TEMPUS  
and of hope

THE  
TIMES  
CITY  
DIARY

**Three line up  
in Birch stakes**

WITH 12 months still to go before Abbey National announces a replacement for Peter Birch's job, the betting is hotting up.

Among the strongest candidates is Ian Harley, 46, finance director, and 25 years an Abbey man. Andrew Pople, 38, managing director of retail banking, is also fancied, but word has it that he may have to wait until next time round. Tim Ingram, 49, managing director of the bank's European arm, is also proving a stayer. Meanwhile, Chris Wermann is the internal candidate tipped to succeed Jane Agerus as chief press officer when the latter moves to Merrill Lynch.

**THERE are those among us who think Peps is an aid to indigestion. Seven per cent of people surveyed by Direct Line in conjunction with MORI mistook a Pep for an antacid tablet. Six per cent said it was a type of sports drink; 2 per cent said it was a tropical fish, and 18 per cent came clean, admitting that they didn't have a darn clue.**

**Goodbye Trevor**  
THE brain behind the Wonderbra advert has defected to a rival agency. Trevor "Hello Boys" Beattie has quit the TBWA Simons Palmer Agency after four years, yesterday switching to GGT. The advertising whiz-kid, who also created *The Professionals*, Nissan Almera commercial, quit over TBWA's reported £12 million merger with Simons. Born and raised in Balsall Heath, Birmingham, Beattie earned a reported £250,000 a year at TBWA. Jay Pond-Jones, GGT's creative director, says: "I see him as a sort of creative coach to my more managerial role."



Caprice Bourret: the new Wonderbra girl

**Exotic taste**

PAUL ROCHELEAU is to succeed Robin Paul as chief executive of Albright & Wilson. When Dr Paul retires at the end of July, Rocheleau and his family expect to be happily at home somewhere in England. Whether his address will be in Birmingham, where A&W has its HQ, or London, has yet to be decided, however. The peripatetic Rocheleau, currently president of A&W Americas, lived in five houses in three countries during his first six years with the international chemicals group. In Birmingham on business for the next few days, Rocheleau is already developing a fast for bald curries. "I'll say it is enjoyable, but only in limited quantities," he tells me.

**Ken gets blues**

KEN CLARKE will see his brown Hush Puppies turn blue today. On a visit to Xerox Business Services, the Chancellor will be presented with a photograph of himself, digitally remastered using Xerox colour technology, dressed in blue suede shoes. He will be at Rank Xerox's head office in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, for the signing of a contract between Xerox Business Services and Bridge Direct, a Nottingham business in Mr Clarke's Rotherham constituency.

MORAG PRESTON

THE TIMES CITY DIARY



THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

hope

## **Shares end at best levels of the day**

**TRADING PERIOD:** Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

هذا من الاصح



THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997



■ THEATRE 1  
In Stratford the rarely seen *Cymbeline* is given a smart overhaul by the RSC ...



■ THEATRE 2  
... while in London, *Faust* is radically but impenetrably revised for our frazzled times



■ RADIO  
The novels of Armistead Maupin are the starting point for a new travel series about America



■ TOMORROW  
Does Tennessee Williams's *Camino Real* justify revival? Read Benedict Nightingale's view

THEATRE: Excellent RSC acting in a fine production at Stratford; plus some philosophical confusion, and an Irish one-hander

## Doom, gloom and humanity

ACTORS Touring Company is into doomsday scenarios. For its last production Nick Philippou rediscovered an Odon von Horvath play from 1926 that comically savaged a Europe in disarray after the First World War. Now Mark Ravenhill provides a text where a character argues that humanity itself is at an end. I wish I had been able to follow the argument.

Faust  
Lyric Studio,  
Hammersmith

This is not the *Faust* of Marlowe or Goethe or Thomas Mann. It is closer to Klaus Mann's *Mephisto*, where the tempter and the tempted co-exist in one person, but in the Ravenhill version these roles switch between his two characters. One is a Foucault-like philosopher embarking on a sexual spree in California, the other a callow youth at war with his father. We do not learn the names of the protagonists but are told that the father is a computer billionaire named Bill — not a name one would lightly choose.

Since Ravenhill is the author of *Shopping and Fucking*, the likelihood was high that alarming events would occur. Publicity photos suggested that blood would flow, and so it does, though the injury to the professor's eyes causes no lasting inconvenience.

So what happens? On Pippa Nissen's spare and mobile set, philosopher and youth do a deal. The philosopher wants "to live a little"; the youth to escape from Dad.

The lean and hungry look of the French-Canadian actor Alain Pelletier gives a good impression of cerebral rigour, and a certain intellectual fa-

tigue comes across in his gesture of tilting his head sideways and supporting its weight on a hand. Zoomorphic shapes are projected onto video screens, and a man's naked body too, bleeding from self-inflicted slashes.

These wounds come in because the youth — a high-twitch performance by Pete Baillie — has trouble with reality unless it comes by way of video or the Internet. Some guy they meet slices his jugular as a way to approach real reality. Hereabouts the philosopher becomes Mephisto and the youth goes back to his tamer.

None of these events satisfactorily allows an exploration of what I take to be the play's prime question: humanity, whither? The stated answer is that we must be cruel, but this smacks of trimming the argument to fit a desired social solution. On three occasions when the play could oblige us to face something horrible, Philippou never quite shows it. I was grateful for that.

JEREMY KINGSTON



Temper tempted: Alain Pelletier and Pete Baillie

**T**here is an unease about the Royal Shakespeare Company in the air, and not just because the troupe will soon clamber into buses and take a worryingly long summer break from the Barbican. Some say its modern work is disappointing — yet Peter Whelan's fascinating contribution to the Shakespeare archives, *The Herbal Bed*, is about to move to the West End. I myself have felt that its

Cymbeline  
RST, Stratford

classic productions are not "what they were" — yet here is Adrian Noble's superb revival of *Cymbeline*, with Joanne Pearce, Paul Freeman and Guy Henry firmly answering the suspicion that RSC acting is getting weaker.

Noble has made heavyhanded cuts to the text, but they left me unbothered. Indeed, I was relieved to find the laborious opening conversation between First Gent and Second Gent reduced to a deft exegesis narrated by an orange-clad soothsayer to a white-clothed cast clustered over a flame. That instantly establishes the right feel. *Cymbeline* is a wonderfully tall tale, absorbing in itself but packed with ingredients from Shakespeare's other late romances: a pure young heroine, evil in high places, desperate separations, glorious reconciliations, a visit from Mount Olympus, and so on.

An oriental simplicity rules. Anthony Ward's set is a blue box with silken white flooring that rises to hang like a sail above the stage. Two Little Maids From School teeter on stilts in black slippers. The more elevated members of the royal household are Confucian figures in skullcaps and long black jackets. Even the

Romans' red robes owe less to Caesar than to the Mikado.

The battle between them and the British comes with staves, huge banners and Edward Petherbridge's *Cymbeline* aloft on a brass-and-cloth throne. People trip in and out via a walkway running through the stalls.

Why so radical a journey from Britain circa AD 10? Is Noble excusing what's exotic in the story of *Cymbeline*'s daughter Imogen, whose adventures include being be-

trayed by her wicked stepmother, menaced by her husband after the Roman lachimo pretends he has slept with her, disguising herself as a boy and meeting her long-lost brothers in the Welsh wilds, and, after being wrongly deemed dead, waking up to find herself beside a corpse she thinks is her husband but is actually her stepbrother, Cloten?

All I can report is

delight in an evening that combines clarity with a sense of wonder.

Petherbridge solves one of the play's problems by bringing an interestingly pained, flummoxed quality to the undeveloped, unattractive title-character. There is certainly no doubt who wears the pantaloons in his court, given the power that Joanna McCallum's towering Queen majestically exudes.

Pearce's Imogen should probably react more strongly to such setbacks as finding that aj her husband wants to kill her, and bi she is snug-

ging up to what looks like his headless trunk; but she has the essential qualities in abundance. I have never seen her bring more freshness, sweetness and warmth to a part.

The male villains are equally effective. Freeman cannot motivate lachimo's final re-pentance — who could? — but everything about him in the early scenes, from his smile to the silvery glint in his eye, radiates arrogance and sly, steely destructiveness. And Henry does much to

humanise a character usually played as a boorish oaf. His Cloten fastidiously lengthens his name's tell-tale first syllable, and, instead of roaring and blustering, gives the impression of a natural

Aguecheek trying to convince himself he is a mix of Romeo and Hotspur or a long, thin prawn indulging in shark-fantasies. Funny stuff, fine production.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Evidence of seduction: Paul Freeman's Lachimo (left) shows off the bracelet to Damian Lewis's Posthumus, watched by David Glover (Philaro)

## Plot makes a shallow grave

THE hottest action is all over before the start of Colin O'Connor's monologue, *All Those Trammelling Dreams*. Only after the sounds of a scuffle have died down does the play's sole character appear, blood dribbling from his nose and mouth.

Crash landing somewhere

between Edgar Allan Poe and Christopher Isherwood, O'Connor's play doubles as the breathless, febrile testimony of a champagne Charlie. An unpleasant figure, all too easy to distrust, he has been cornered by a mob after a sordid encounter and now addresses an audience he ima-

gines to be filled with impotent bystanders, witnesses and vigilantes baying for some explanation of the night's events.

The effete, dinner-suited sucker, played by Michael McElhatton in a daze of fragility and bluster, begins to offer an account of himself, of his habit of frequenting nightclubs alone, of drinking too much wine and of tipping too extravagantly, and of his uncomfortable connections with a mysterious (and significantly absent) couple. Gradually, a fuzzy picture begins to emerge of a dysfunctional relationship, the very shadowiness of which is its only explanation.

McElhatton always has a mammoth task in bringing an often jerky script together.

O'Connor's play demands that his actor respond to a pressing crowd of gawkers, something which calls for carefully timing and a clipping pace. On opening night, McElhatton certainly kept the speed high, but his occasionally breathlessly high-adrenalin performance came at the expense of some accuracy.

Even though he has written a play which relies on a hidden secret, O'Connor does not seem to have all the skills required to maintain a convincing subterfuge. His twists are always visible and too often sound hollowly literary.

The central notion of perfor-

mance as a hybrid of legal testimony and storytelling is not strong or fresh enough to support the weight of even this short evening and the narrative soon shifts into fantasy territory which, while perhaps offering a useful exercise for an author, has limited rewards for his audience.

McElhatton always has a

a mammoth task in bringing an often jerky script together.

LUKE CLANCY

## Half bored

**T**ravel programmes on radio can never hope to compete with their television equivalents any more than travel brochures would have much of a readership if they lacked pictures. The main example on BBC Radio 4 is *Breakaway* (Radio 4), which is said to be one of the targets in the rifle sights of James Boyle, Radio 4's Controller.

I cannot understand why *Breakaway* persists in trying to visit places. It would be far better to let Ril Dando do the wandering in the sun routine on TV and turn *Breakaway* into a show for travel consumers, leading us through the maze of special offers that aren't *Breakaway* does some of that, but not enough.

But there is another thing that makes the present *Breakaway* unsatisfactory, and that is radio's excellence at doing travel shows that are not ostensibly travel shows at all.

A fine example began on Radio 4 this week. Novel America (Tuesday at 10am, FM only) is a four-part

RADIO

which visits different parts of America through the medium of novels set in those areas. The idea is not new, but I doubt that it has ever been better executed than in this series.

The presenter is Martin Wainwright and in the first programme he says San Francisco through his own eyes and those of the writer Armistead Maupin, creator of the *Tales of the City* stories, which are set in San Francisco.

There were no recommended hotels or ideal vantage points from which to admire the Golden Gate Bridge. Instead there were real people living in real streets doing real jobs offering real experiences of real life. Mainstream travel programmes leave the feeling that the show has been to a place to save us the trouble: this one must have had people reaching for the nearest travel agent.

A fine example began on Radio 4 this week. Novel America (Tuesday at 10am, FM only) is a four-part

PETER BARNARD

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• You can also play Fantasy Formula One with *The Sunday Times* for the chance to win additional prizes.



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06 Gerhard Berger	12 Mike Salo

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14 Jos Verstappen	20 Shinji Nakano
15 Ukyo Katayama	21 Nicola Larini
16 Pedro Diniz	22 Jarno Trulli
17 Ricardo Rosset	23 Jan Magnussen
18 Ralf Schumacher	24 Vincenzo Sospiri

**CONSTRUCTORS GROUP**

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CHANGING TIMES



## ■ CHOICE 1

The Leap into Dance festival features new work by Richard Alston

VENUE: Tomorrow, The Green, Richmond



## ■ CHOICE 2

Maxim Vengerov displays his virtuoso violin technique

VENUE: Recital tonight at the Barbican



THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

LONDON  
AUGUST SANDER An exhibition of approximately 200 photographs depicting rural and urban society in Germany born before and after the First World War opens today in the Watson Gallery, and runs until June 1. Watson's, 70 St Martin's Place, WC2 (0171-808 0059). Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm; Sun, noon-5pm.

LEAP INTO DANCE Richmond's sixth annual dance festival features the London premiere of *Rumours, Visions* by the Richard Alston Dance Company. A powerful triple-bill by the newly formed company includes *Beyond Love and Longing*, *Richmond*, The Green (0181-940 0088); *Tomorrow*, 7.45pm.

MAXIM VENGEROV The virtuoso violinist returns to the Barbican after a three-year absence. This evening's solo recital includes Brahms' *Violin Concerto*; *Egmont* and *Grieg's Violin Sonata*. A selection of music by Tchaikovsky completes the programme. Tickets £10-£12.50. Barbican, EC2 (0171-638 8891). Tonight, 7.45pm.

ELSEWHERE BIRMINGHAM Nabil Sakkidou and Company presents its British premiere of *Kathak*, a traditional Indian dance drama. Directed by Ian Brown, Traverse, Cambridge Street (0131-228 1404). Preview tonight and tomorrow.

## WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Maxey

mood, movement and feeling. Prism receives its London premiere in the Purcell Room, Southbank Centre, MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Elephant Road (0171-449 2638). Tonight and tomorrow, 8pm.

CARDIFF Conductor Grant Llewellyn, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the BBC National Chorus of Wales celebrate 50 years of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama's creation. With Rebecca Evans, soprano, John Mark Ainsley, tenor, and Neil Davies, baritone. Sung in German. Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (01222 879441). Tomorrow, 7.30pm.

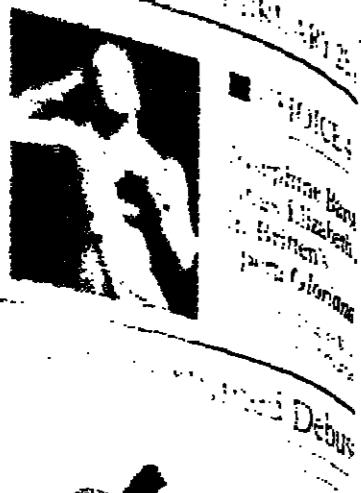
EDINBURGH Travese Theatre Company presents the European première of Ariel Dorfman's play, *Widows*, written in collaboration with Tony Kushner. When a woman among the unprivileged and angry, experienced by the mothers, wives and daughters whose men have deserted them, becomes a woman apart, she becomes a widow. Directed by Ian Brown, Traverse, Cambridge Street (0131-228 1404). Preview tonight and tomorrow.

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THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997



## ■ POP 1

U2 try so hard to be trendy on their new album, but *Pop* lacks authentic snap and crackle



## ■ POP 2

...and James's attempt to keep up with the pace is more mishmash than *Whiplash*



## ■ POP 3

...but Suzanne Vega gives her eclectic artistry a twirl to good effect on *Nine Objects of Desire*



## ■ POP 4

...and, in concert, Steve Earle captivated his fans with a vintage display of bleak lyricism

POP ALBUMS: The band that dictated trends for so long now follows them, says David Sinclair

# U2 in peril of losing the edge

**U2**  
*Pop*  
(Island 524 3340 £13.99)  
THESE ARE trying times for supergroups. If R.E.M. can fail to hit their sales targets with an album as good as *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*, then anyone is vulnerable to the restless mood of record buyers. In the past, U2 have been uncannily adept at judging how and when to ring the changes, and *Pop* confirms them as the consummate rock strategists. But although it is a resourceful, intelligent and at times rewarding record, *Pop* is not a great U2 album.

It starts with the wonderful *Discotheque*, a flurry of neat, jokey words, ingeniously double-tracked in different octaves. It suggests a bold, hip, dance-rock direction, an impression confirmed by the bustling techno rhythm and industrial sound effects of *Mofa*, in which Bono delivers a lyric of mortal intensity in a croaky mien that gradually rises to a tortured falsetto.

However, the propulsive of these two tracks fails to materialise as the album then drifts into more traditional territory with the melancholy evangelism of *If God Will Send His Angels and Starting at the Sun*. With the exception of the lovely, rooty *The Playboy Mansion*, tunes are generally in short supply, a deficiency which the various production tricks do not altogether remedy.

The cumulative effect of so much religious imagery eventually becomes tiresome, and a bunching up of slow and/or unstructured numbers causes the album to tail off towards the end. It is not that U2 have



U2 — (from left) Bono, Adam Clayton, the Edge and Larry Mullen — have not lost the plot on their album, *Pop*, so much as surrendered the initiative

lost the plot, so much as surrendered the initiative. Whereas *Zooropa* and *Achtung Baby* were delightful new chapters in the story of pop, *Pop* sounds as if the band have been listening to the Prodigy and Tricky without quite working out where to go

with these dynamic new sounds.

**JAMES**  
*Whiplash*  
(Fontana 534 354 £13.99)

HAVING retreated from the wilfully experimental approach of their previous al-

bum, *Wah Wah*, James displays signs of Simple Minds syndrome on the more conventional half of *Whiplash*. There is nothing wrong, per se, with songs such as *Lost a Friend*, *Homeboy* or *She's a Star*, with their sturdy guitar-driven structures and gliding arena-pop choruses. But they do betray a certain hardening of the creative arteries.

As if to counter such accusations, the group adopts a self-consciously radical approach on several other songs. But, apart from the country-tinged shuffle of *Walking Along*, these are not very good. *Greenpeace* is a PC polemic about man's malevolent impact on the environment; *Go to the Bank* offers a strange, electro-pop vision of consumerist hell, and *Watering Hole* wanders unsteadily down the hypnotic trip hop avenue. The end result is more mishmash than whiplash.

**SUZANNE VEGA**  
*Nine Objects of Desire*  
(A&M 545 583 £13.99)

SUZANNE VEGA is one of those people who looks different in every photograph, and there is a similarly elusive quality to her music. Her folk roots remain, most obviously in her wordplay, but songs such as *Caramel* and *Thin*

man now have delicious jazz and Latin influences. Add the dreamy quality of Mitchell Froom's production to the mix and you have an album of sensitive, mercurial grace.

There is often a bleak cast to Vega's lyrics, as on *Casual Match*: "A casual match in a very dry field/Fire and ash is the season's yield". But the choruses of *Headshots* and *No Cheap Thrill* have the kind of instant uplift that would make even a pure pop songwriter happy.

**REPUBLICA**

*Republica*  
(Deconstruction/BMG 74321 410522 £11.99)

AS A band composed of refugees from N-Joi (singer Saffron), Flowered Up (keyboard player Tim Dorney) and Bow Wow Wow (drummer Dave Barbaros), Republica would have been labelled a supergroup in an earlier era. Instead, they have gone for the Bush-patented "big in America but still to make it at home" tag, thanks to the modest overseas success of their single *Ready to Go* and this debut album.

Operating on the cusp of dance and what the Americans call modern rock, their sound could not be more of the moment, even if Saffron's pouty, shouty vocals sound more Shampoo than Garbage. Still, there are many banging tracks that will not have too much trouble competing for attention in the clamorous world of young people's pop.

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

## TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 (6) *Attack of the Grey Lantern* ... Mansun (Parlophone)
- 2 (2) *Spice* ... Spice Girls (Virgin)
- 3 (4) *The Smurfs Hits '97 - Vol 1* ... Smurfs (EMI TV)
- 4 (7) *Tragic Kingdom* ... No Doubt (Interscope)
- 5 (9) *Ocean Drive* ... Lighthouse Family (Wild Card)
- 6 (1) *Blur* ... Blur (Food)
- 7 (3) *White on Blonde* ... Texas (Mercury)
- 8 (5) *Evita* ... Original Soundtrack (Warner Bros)
- 9 (8) *Blue is the Colour* ... Beautiful South (Go! Discs)
- 10 (23) *Everything Must Go* ... Manic Street Preachers (Epic)

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● Figure in brackets denotes last week's position

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## Material wealth

**BOBBY WELLINS**  
*The Satin Album*  
(Jazzcat 111CD 9607)

THE appropriateness of Scottish tenor saxophonist Bobby Wellins's slightly world-weary, vulnerable but cultured sound to ballad material is so perfect that the only surprise about this recording devoted entirely to the songs on Billie Holiday's last great album, *Lady in Satin*, is that it hadn't been thought of until now.

Wellins effortlessly imbues all he plays with such plaintive tenderness that the emotional impact of the album is almost as great as that of its template. His rhythm section — pianist Colin Purbrook, bassist Dave Green and drummer Clark Tracey — play with exemplary restraint, but nevertheless manage to contribute a number of telling solos. Overall, a masterful display of controlled sensitivity from one of the most original saxophone voices in European jazz.

**JAZZ ALBUMS**

**STANLEY TURRENTINE**

*Easy Walker*

(Blue Note

CDP 7243 8 29908 2 6)

RECORDED at three 1960s sessions and featuring McCoy Tyner, Mickey Roker and Billy Cobham among others, this compilation underlines just how great is the loss of Turrentine to jazz proper, immersed as he has been for the past decade in pop-jazz and fusion. On these sessions the tenorman's big, swinging, bluesy sound — even when applied to contemporary pop vehicles such as Burt Bacharach's *What the World Needs Now Is Love* — is rendered all the more effective by being buoyed up by airy rhythm-section work, complemented by Tyner's sparkling solos.

CHRIS PARKER

## kindred spirits

Missouri Sky

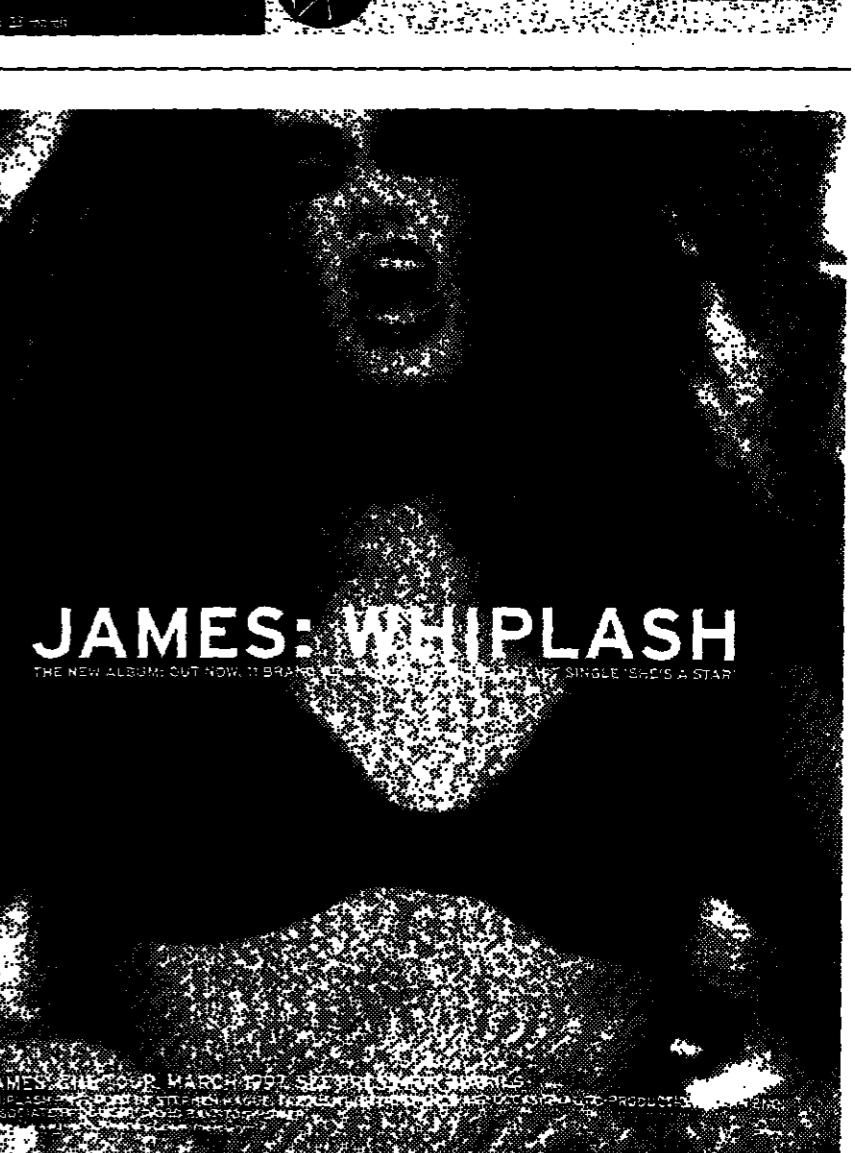
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## OUNDLE SCHOOL

## Girls Sixth Form Entry 1997

Oundle has just announced its next step in co-education: the opening of a fourth Girls Boarding House in September 1997.

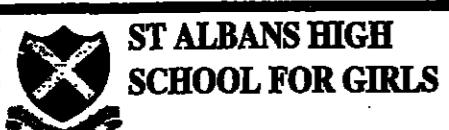
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Oundle School is a Registered Educational Charity: Number 309921



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THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

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## EDUCATION

## Academy of heads

Anne Lee questions the approach of an ambitious attempt to give lessons in the art of being a head teacher

In the age of clones there is, as yet, no perfect prototype head teacher. The Chief Inspector of Schools estimates that 3,000 heads are performing inadequately, and those currently in post show no strong desire to stay there. The number of vacancies for senior school heads has increased by 93 per cent.

This week, in an effort to improve educational standards and the professionalism of the head teacher, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) launched the pilot of its National Professional Headteacher Qualification. But will this much-needed qualification do the trick?

Heads say that their most frequent difficulties lie in dealing with staff, resolving arguments, motivating and criticising with tact, dealing with staffroom politics and relationships with governors. They have also said that they are concerned about how to present the school positively to parents and how to deal with the media. Many chief executives will also say that their greatest challenge lies in dealing with people. But the transition from teacher to head is a quantum leap greater than the transition from, say, finance director to managing director, and the management training needs can be enormous.

Heads have to learn to think like chief executives while retaining the inspiration and humanity that made them great teachers in the first place. This means learning the language of organisation theorists. While many heads grope towards developing the right plans, framing them in the paradigm of organisational development will make their task much easier.

The head who understands how management structures evolve, and the management styles needed, will be more comfortable and assured than one who feels that he or she is constantly trying to paddle upstream.

In practice, the head's day is a procession of decisions that rapidly need to be placed in order of importance and urgency. Each

decision needs to be made against the knowledge of the options available. The head teachers' qualification will have succeeded only if he learns to make the right choices. This means giving plenty of time to learn from mistakes made in the privacy of the "Heads' University" rather than allowing experimentation on hapless staff, students or parents.

The mixture of teaching methods which the TTA envisages — lectures, case studies, computer simulations and assignments and presentations — suggests an approach typical of an MBA programme. A masters programme is the quality level to which the programme must aspire. Highly qualified teachers would find anything less an insult. However, only the first module of strategic leadership and accountability is compulsory. This can be completed in 180 hours (including homework). In only 60 hours, the programme will cover differing leadership styles, the many different organisation patterns and theories, and the monitoring methods available. Presumably, the compulsory module must also include sections on relevant legislation, including employment law, the Children Act and health and safety.

A s the devolution of power to schools continues, the compulsory course will need to include work on accountancy skills and computer modelling. Then the head of a large school will be able to plan ahead and monitor progress both financially and academically.

The range of issues that heads have to deal with is wider than for any other type of chief executive. They must be able to think and plan strategically, but they must also know how to harness parents' positive energy, have productive relationships with the police, the local community and to deal with a governing body that may have diverse and sometimes idiosyncratic interests. The head must be a major link with the outside world. A head



Challenge: Peter Clark, acting head of the troubled Ridings School

who is clever and quick to spot opportunities in business or the community can enrich the lives of pupils in the school, and can increase their aspirations.

Heads will also be working in a world in which many have been on courses to learn negotiating skills and project management — not topics that many in education have previously encountered.

From the broad issues to the individual — inspiring a recalcitrant teenager to see a future, an angry parent to understand the need for discipline — no other role has so many stakeholders.

Heads who in the past have satisfactorily completed an MBA type of programme have either

done it full-time or at the expense of health, friends and family. If we want most or all of our heads to undertake a meaningful learning experience, time off work will have to be made available.

We need to ensure that never again does Ofsted have grounds to castigate so many heads. A thorough evaluation of this pilot, and a comparison with the training programmes which other chief executives undergo, will be essential.

*Management education does not come cheaply or quickly. Only if pitched at the right level will it become the national jewel we need.*

• The author is governor of Queenswood School, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, a former head and businesswoman.

Viv Wakeham on why a school took the Government to court

"IT'S ALL DOWN IN HERE - GET A LOW MARK AND THEY'LL GIVE YOU A LONG HOLIDAY!"



## When league tables tell lies

The governing body of West Horndon County Primary School could hardly be described as a radical group. All the major parties are represented on it and the governors are mostly professional people, some retired. Yet last month we went to the High Court to challenge the Government over the format of the primary school league tables to be published in March.

We felt strongly about this issue because the tables will be so unfair to our school, a small village school in rural Essex, of which I am head teacher. Of the local children who took the standard assessment tests last May, 50 per cent achieved the "expected" Level 4 or above in English. Yet the league tables will show that only 35 per cent achieved this standard.

The reasons for this are entirely beyond the school's control. First, of the 120 children in the school, 20 are placed by the local education authority in a special unit for speech and language disorders. All these children have statements of special educational needs, which mean that their difficulties place them in the bottom 2 per cent of the population. None of them lives in the area served by the school, some coming from as far away as Chelmsford (15 miles) and Maldon (25 miles). Yet their results will be included in those for the whole school and will inevitably lower the percentage achieving Level 4.

Secondly, the 11-year-olds of West Horndon were unlucky last May. Four of them missed some or all of the tests. One was hit on the head by a golf club while playing in the park. He was badly not to lose the sight of the eye. He actually returned to school for the final tests, still in great pain, but by then he had missed one paper in each subject. Another child suffered a severe allergic reaction just before the tests and was taken to hospital. In a school the size of ours, four children represent 24 per cent of the eligible pupils, and those absent from the tests are deemed to have failed.

We went to court to argue that the percentage of children who actually took the tests should appear in the tables and those in special units should be excluded. With astonishing contempt for the professionalism of head

teachers, the Department for Education and Employment argued in court that to publish the percentage of actual pupils, rather than those who were eligible, would encourage schools to "authorise absences for holidays" for low-attaining pupils.

The department also argued that there was no difference between children with special educational needs in their local school and those in special units.

The judge, Mr Justice Harrison, accepted the points we made, saying: "One can understand the concern which has been expressed by the school ... I fully understand why they feel as they do." He added that the tables will "make the results look poorer than they in fact are ... that is a matter of concern."

But the law gives the Secretary of State very wide powers to "publish information in such a form and manner as she considers appropriate". The judge concluded that the proposed format was not actually perverse, which was the only basis for a legal challenge.

Though the application was turned down, we are pleased to

have been able to raise doubts about the validity of the league tables. Funding for schools is based largely on the number of pupils on roll. Even one or two parents choosing an alternative school for their child on the basis of this misleading information could affect the viability of small schools in particular.

Schools are already increasingly reluctant to admit children with special educational needs because they are expensive to educate and have a potentially damaging effect on league table position. Including the results of children in special units will deter most schools from agreeing to have one.

In court, the department repeatedly made the point that the tables are only one source of information about a school. All schools now publish a prospectus with much fuller information, and encourage parents to visit before making a decision.

We hope that parents will consider such things as the range of the curriculum, the level of care for children, how happy they are in school and the extracurricular activities on offer, rather than limited statistics in league tables.

## INDEPENDENT EDUCATION

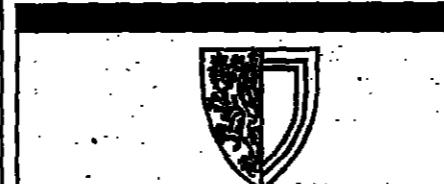
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THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

## RACING: GROWING SUPPORT FOR IRISH-TRAINED CHAMPION HURDLE HOPE

BY RICHARD EVANS  
RACING CORRESPONDENT

I'M SUPPOSIN emerged as a Champion Hurdle "springer-yester-day" – and an examination of the Irish raider's smart Flat form, helps to explain why.

The Kevin Prendergast-trained five-year-old, who will be ridden at Cheltenham by Charlie Swan, finished a fine fifth in the Irish St Leger behind stablemate Oscar Schindler. He was beaten only half a length by Pilsudski, the subsequent Breeders' Cup Turf winner, in the Royal Whip at the Curragh, and won the Ulster Harp Derby at Down Royal in July.

The heavy support for I'm Supposin, who has won both

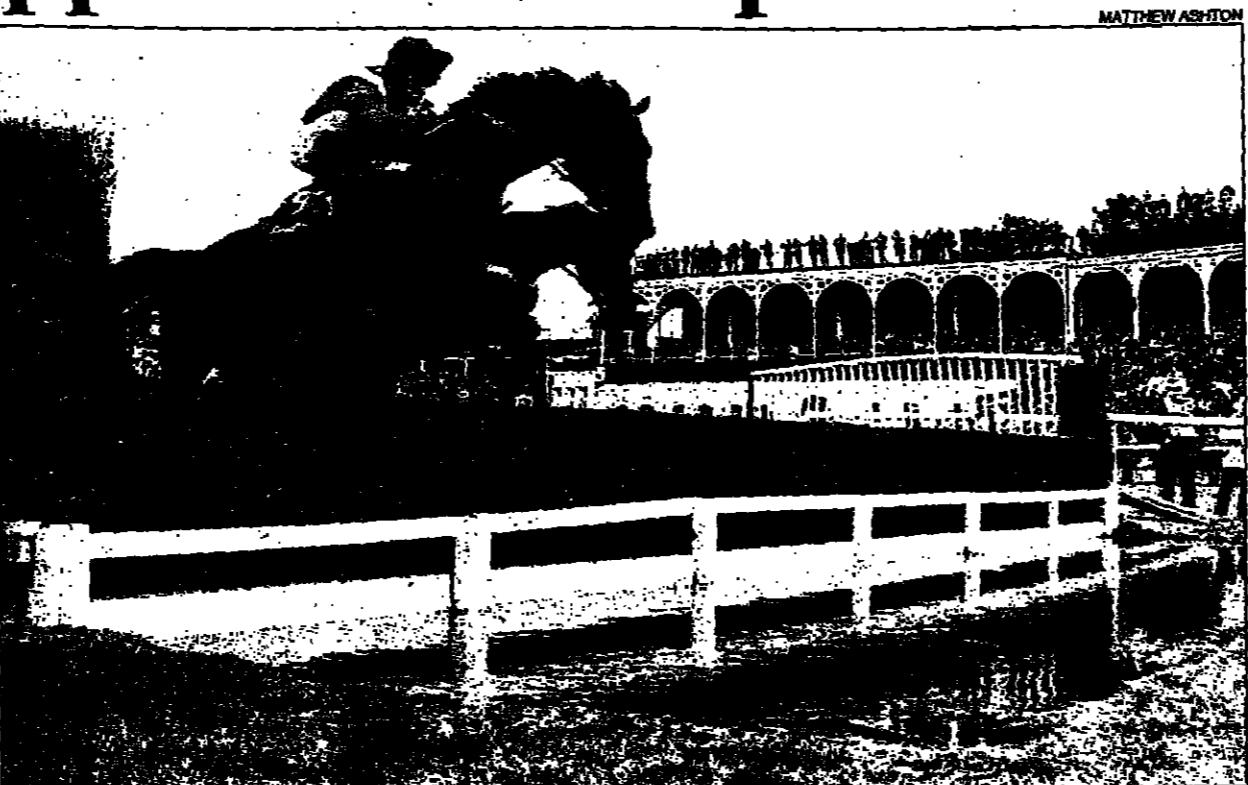
RICHARD EVANS

Nap: MOONLIGHTER  
(5.00 Newbury)  
Next best: SPLENDID THYME  
(2.00 Newbury)

starts over hurdles this winter, prompted Ladbrokes to cut his odds from 10-1 to 8-1 yesterday. "People feel if he can translate that Flat form to hurdles he will come to Cheltenham with an outstanding chance," Mike Dillon, the bookmakers' spokesman, said.

I'm Supposin was given a rating of 112 in the end-of-season International Classifications, just 1lb below the mark awarded to Alderbrook in 1995 only months before he won the Champion Hurdle, and superior to the Flat form shown by Collier Bay and Sammarino.

Prendergast, who saddled Talgo Abess to finish third to Saucy Kit in the 1967 Champion Hurdle, said yesterday: "I



Telliacherry leaps over the water jump on the way to victory in the novices' chase at Ludlow yesterday

have had four runners at the Festival and all have been placed, but this would be my best chance. He has always been a good horse without getting to the heights on the Flat. When he first jumped a hurdle in November the way he measured it you would think he had been jumping all his life."

The form of I'm Supposin's second hurdle success, in which he beat Finnegan's Hollow by an effortless seven lengths, was boosted when the runner-up came within inches of being the highly regarded Istabraq, under a hands-and-heels ride at Leopardstown

Ladbrokes has pushed out Imperial Call, last year's Cheltenham Gold Cup winner, to 5-1 from 4-1 after reports of a disappointing workout at Cheltenham racecourse yesterday. However, jockey Conor O'Dwyer declared himself happy with the horse.

Earlier this month, Prendergast cast his eye over I'm Supposin's Cheltenham opponents and added: "You cannot discard a previous winner such as Collier Bay but the connections of the fancied runners all say they

want soft ground. My horse doesn't mind any ground. He's won on soft and hard and has a good cruising speed."

With more than three inches of rain having fallen at Cheltenham since February 10, the going is officially good.

Edward Gillespie, the managing director, said a further inch was required before the Festival and if it does not rain the tapis will be turned on.

His remarks came at the official opening of Cheltenham's magnificent new five-level Tattersalls grandstand, the highlight of which is a glass-fronted restaurant overlooking the home of National

Hunt racing. The 300-seater restaurant will be one of the most sought after – and expensive – viewing areas next month. The Festival price tag is £345 per person – and that does not include drinks.

With an ample supply of lavatories, bars and Tote betting booths, the new grandstand should help to ease the crush which has been a feature of the Festival in recent years as crowds build up to 60,000 on Gold Cup day.

The Horserace Totalisator Bill, which will enable the Tote to bet on non-sporting events for the first time, received the Royal Assent yesterday.

## Bahhare's progress delights Dunlop

BY JULIAN MUSCAT

BAHHARE, ante-post favourite for the 2,000 Guineas, has resumed faster work in preparation for the Flat season's first classic at Newmarket on May 3. The unbeaten son of Woodman is to warm up for the one-mile test in the Craven Stakes, run over the Guinea course and distance two weeks earlier.

"We have just started to increase the tempo," Bahhare's trainer, John Dunlop, said yesterday from his Arundel base. "I am delighted with the way he has come through the winter. He has strengthened through his back, loin and quarters and he is taking his work well. I would like to get a prep race into him – it wouldn't do him any harm to gain some experience."

A half-brother to the 1995 champion miler, Bahhare, Bahhare was assessed 260 below Revoque in the International Classifications published last month. However, he is preferred to Robert Sangster's colt in 2,000 Guineas betting lists on the strength of his performance in the Champagne Stakes at Doncaster, where he mastered In Command, the subsequent winner of the Dewhurst Stakes, by 3½ lengths in course record time.

In the close season, Bahhare spent four days with veterinarians in Dubai, emerging with a clean bill of health. Plans for him to spend the winter in Dubai were later revised. By contrast, Sahn, a stablemate of Bahhare, has been in the emirate for four months.

## NEWBURY

THUNDERER

2.00 Get Real  
2.30 THE TOISEACH (map)  
4.00 Holland House  
4.30 Infamous  
5.00 Flexley Wood

Ceri Evans 4.00 Miss Millbrook.

## GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 11343 GOOD TIMES 13 (BF,F,S) Mrs D Polden 5 Hat 12-0	... W West 13 (T) 88
102 11344 SPLENDID THYME 14 (S) (O) Gohman 1 T Caley 5-11-4	J Deacon 95
103 11345 CATHERINE'S WAY 14 (F) (C) and 5 Hat 11-1-0	L Harvey 97
104 11346 DOLPHIN 14 (S) (O) Gohman 1 T Caley 5-11-4	P Ryan 97
105 11347 GRANADA 14 (S) (O) Gohman 1 T Caley 5-11-4	P Gohman 98
106 11348 FIVE PO BOX 16 (S) (F) Mrs D Polden 1 T Caley 5-11-4	P Hales 98
107 11349 REVENGE 14 (S) (F) Mrs D Polden 1 T Caley 5-11-4	W Marshall 98
108 11350 SPLENDID THYME 14 (S) (O) Gohman 1 T Caley 5-11-4	G Fortune 98
109 11351 MARCHES MAGIC 455 (The Marches Partnership) J Daffey 7-11-0	A Ainsley 93
110 11352 SPLENDID THYME 14 (S) (O) Gohman 1 T Caley 7-11-0	D Polden 98
111 11353 MOON DREN 15 (S) (F) Colin Southgate 1 T Caley 7-11-0	S McNeil 98
112 11354 PEERS FLIGHT 15 (S) (F) Mrs D Polden 1 T Caley 7-11-0	E McNeil 98
113 11355 SPLENDID THYME 15 (S) (O) Gohman 1 T Caley 7-11-0	T Jones 98
114 11356 REVENGE 15 (S) (F) Mrs D Polden 1 T Caley 7-11-0	R Fortune 98
115 11357 SPLENDID THYME 15 (S) (O) Gohman 1 T Caley 7-11-0	F Fortune 98
116 11358 STRONGS TEA 15 (F) (M) Mrs J Parris 1 T Caley 7-11-0	G Fortune 98
117 11359 SPLENDID THYME 15 (S) (O) Gohman 1 T Caley 7-11-0	J Fortune 98
118 11360 SPLENDID THYME 15 (S) (O) Gohman 1 T Caley 7-11-0	P Fortune 98
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## RUGBY UNION

# England can bide their time and win

**Rob Andrew counsels against an adventurous start that could hand the game to France**

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Several commentators are urging England to start attacking France from the first minute at Twickenham tomorrow. They suggest style, whereas I would promote caution. The notion that if England can succeed in an all-out offensive at the end of matches, then they should be able to do so from the start is naive. Frankly, these people misunderstand the game.

Rugby is about attrition as much as it is about flowing movement. It is obvious that an opposition defence fitter and better organised at the start than it is later in a game. It is then that defenders drop off half a yard and gaps open. England would be handing France victory on a plate were they to begin crazily, fall two or three penalty goals behind, and find themselves playing catch-up.

Perhaps England's only undoing would be if they did force the game. This is now a confident, relaxed England, who know what they are doing. A controlled, patient build-up is again what is required. Those who would have them playing off-the-cuff from the start also seem to forget that the opposition this time is considerably stronger than England have faced so far in the five nations' championship.

I liked the look of England's schedule from the start, and they have fulfilled most expectations. It has been the ideal preparation for the France game: a comfortable home victory against a weak Scotland side and then an even better win in Ireland. Of course, it could be the precursor to a fall, but I doubt it. Even at the best of times, the French do not relish the trip to Twickenham.

In the majority of international matches, but especially against France, the physical battle up front dictates results. There is nothing to frighten the England front row. Mark Regan and Graham Rowntree were at their best in Dublin. Martin Johnson and Simon Shaw, in the second row, should be confident of winning a lot of ball in the back row. Lawrence Dallaglio is in his rightful place at blindside flanker. Richard Hill looks

increasingly impressive, and Tim Rodber is riding high after a storming performance against Ireland.

France can — and I am sure will — release Abdellatif Benazzi, a one-man pack, off the scrums, but I expect England to close him down. The problem with having such a well-known danger man is that the opposition does its homework on him. We did the same in the days of Serge Blanco and Pierre Berbizier. We knew their threat, and sought deliberately to blunt it, often successfully.

Without Ntamack, Saint-André, Castaigne, or Roumat, France, vitally, are missing players of character and international experience. Good individuals have taken their places. Like New Zealand, France churn out players of flair and quality, but it is an unsettled side and one that appears to be not quite sure where it is going.

At Toulouse, Pierre Villepreux was responsible for one of the great club sides. He is assistant coach to Jean-Claude Skrela and the two are looking to produce an ambitious style of play. In the defeat of Wales, though, France made mistakes that would play into England's hands should they be repeated tomorrow.

The new spirit of openness within rugby, Kelso greeted him like a long-lost son, while many in the wider rugby community rated him as the instant answer to Scotland's ills.

"I'll have to score ten tries and kick 15 goals to live up to it," Tait said yesterday. He understands why expectations are high but insists they are unrealistic. What he can offer is a mental hardness forged in rugby league and through years as a professional sportsman, something his Scotland colleagues are only beginning to experience. "I was surprised that players should immediately be expected to be fitter and stronger just because they were full time."

The impact he made on the Scotland A side last month, when a strong Welsh team was beaten by 50 points, has left people hoping for a repeat performance tomorrow, when he wins his ninth cap, ten years on from his international debut. His influence and organisational skills were

readily evident in that A international, yet he admits to having been "frightened to death". He recalled: "I kept looking at the Welsh team thinking, 'I am up against Leigh Davies, the best centre in Britain last year, and I'm going to be shown up'."

He was not and the call for his reinstatement was heeded. Now, Murrayfield awaits.

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Tait breaks clear, wearing the colours of Newcastle, the club that brought him back to rugby union

## Tait offers true professionalism

**Mark Souster meets the Scotland centre with the ability to revive their season**

**THE NEW SPIRIT OF OPENNESS WITHIN RUGBY**

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# Hooked on first taste of southern comfort

**E**ither they are employing midgets as cameramen on Sky Sports, or someone is trying to tell us that football is a kiddies' game. Before Arsenal v Wimbledon at Highbury last weekend, the camera wandered around outside the ground, positioned rather confusingly at knee-height, and kept bumping into small boys in MERCEN shirts, who obligingly showed off their face paint, or held up their programmes, cheering.

It's a deliberate ploy, I think. They are suggesting to us that football matches are roughly the same experience as a trip to the panto. Crowd members singled out by cameras are almost always harmless children; and if the women are caught mouthing obscenities (as they often are), the picture promptly switches somewhere else. A cover-up, I call it. When a yob-breaks out as it did at Filbert Street the other week, a decision is made by the BBC not to show the incident, on the grounds that it gives the perpetrators "publicity". But it's all part of air-brushing the yobs out of the story, as if they don't exist.

So, what's it like in the family enclosure of a football stadium? Well, I have to tell you, it's brilliant. A bit draughty, and a bit weird, but

"The kids ate chips, which I coveted"

attendance

Things are on the up at Brighton, and the home team won 3-2, a crucial result. As any fool knows, the Albion have recently been galvanised into action by the new manager (encouragingly named Steve Gritt) and are now just one point behind Doncaster Rovers, running fast to catch up with a departing train, having previously been dumped on the platform with a pile of luggage and given a hankie to wave.

Everyone assumed it was all up for Brighton, especially when two points were deducted. But they were wrong.

## RUGBY LEAGUE

# Fighting in aisles over Central Park supermarket plan

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

UNLESS a possible legal challenge is successful, Central Park, the home of Wigan since 1902, looks set to become a supermarket in a £12 million deal with the Tesco chain. Only when the doors open and trolleys glide across the acres where Billy Boston, Ellery Hanley and Martin Offiah once flew, will people quite believe it.

After this season, Wigan are looking to move to Bolton Wanderers Football Club's new ground, five miles away at Horwich, on a temporary lease. A longer-term objective is a new stadium in the town, but the upheaval has infuriated shareholders. They recently voted by a majority of seven to one for a multimillion-pound redevelopment of Central Park put forward by David Whelan, chairman of Wigan Athletic Football Club.

Whelan was returning early from a skiing holiday in Austria last night, angry that his popular proposal for the town's rugby league and football clubs to share Central Park had been overlooked by the three-man Wigan board. A £1.5 million deposit for the site had reportedly been agreed by Tesco, which is to seek outline planning permission for its development.

Whelan's proposal to buy the ground for £4 million and spend an additional £12.5 million developing it would leave Wigan with only £700,000 working capital after clearing debts. The Tesco plan provides the club with more money for reinvestment but, in leaving Central Park, how many of

their supporters might Wigan leave behind?

In exercising apparent superior voting rights as majority debenture shareholders, Jack Robinson, the Wigan chairman, and Tom Rathbone, another director, appear to have sanctioned the supermarket deal. Earlier this week, John Martin, the only director to back Whelan's proposal, resigned because he said, he could "no longer stand by and watch the club slowly drain away".

St Helens, the Super League champions, and Challenge Cup-holders, are calling for the Rugby Football League to consider the introduction of a fixed penalty disciplinary system. "We understand that the Australian Super League is considering the same kind of operation," David Howes, the St Helens chief executive, said. "It is logical that the same kind of package should be available to Super League clubs world-wide."

The drama of the past three weeks, starting with the defeat at St Helens in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup, is fast becoming a crisis. Vaenga Tuigamala, at Newcastle, and the highly popular Graeme West, who was dismissed as coach, painted a hapless picture of interference at board level.

Martin is seeking to discover whether he can legally challenge the board's decision. "I believe the board are ready to ignore the will of the shareholders," he said. "I think I am talking on behalf of them and fans in saying that I can't believe they want to see the world's greatest rugby league club playing in Bolton. It would be the start of a nomadic existence."

Wigan are officially maintaining that no deal has yet been done, but Robinson admitted that Tesco's offer would be difficult to refuse. "The lease offered by Mr Whelan offers us no way of generating any revenue other than through the turnstiles and Mr Whelan takes ten per cent of that," he said. "If we were to accept £4 million from him for Central Park, when it is worth £12 million, the directors would be held legally responsible."

The Wigan Observer was contacted yesterday by numerous supporters who were angered by the supermarket plan. Neil Barker, the newspaper's sports editor, said: "People are up in arms. It now seems that the shareholders' meeting at which the Whelan proposal was carried was a pointless exercise."

How will Tesco commemorate great feats by Wigan through nine decades? A plaque by the mange-tout, perhaps. Although less bloody than another confrontation, the proposed supermarket and depot at Wigan's town centre location is unlikely to be built without a fight. The Battle of Wigan Lane took place there 300 years ago and the area beyond the Kop is known as Bloody Mountains.

LYNNE TRUSS



Kicking and Screaming

Seagulls! Rah-Rah! Seagulls! What a shock for Doncaster, who had settled into the last vacant seat with a sigh of relief — only to look out of the window and see the Albion outside, shouting "Wait for me!" and sprinting to catch up.

This life-or-death struggle at the tail-end of the league is easily as exciting as the contention for glory at the top. Not only is there more capacity for heroism from those who are about-to-die, but — less laudably — the famous dictum by Gore Vidal applies more vividly: "It is not enough to succeed. Others must fail."

Brighton have good reason to stamp on the knuckles of everybody with less than 40 points in the third division, and gleeful cheers were heard on Saturday when news of Doncaster's defeat at Northampton Town came through. For Brighton to survive, someone else must make the ultimate sacrifice. And, thanks a lot, we don't mind if you do.

Of course, I had no idea a points table could hold so much fascination until this season. During Euro '96, I remember complaining that the letters "F" and "A" at the top of a table were not explained anywhere on the page — and all my wild stats didn't help.

Now, after every match I watch on telly, I try to video the briefly-flashed new table ("Too fast, too fast") and then study it at leisure, making notes.

Frankly, the most dismaying development in recent weeks was the decision of *Match of the Day*, the weekly BBC magazine, to go monthly, thus leaving me empty-handed on Thursday mornings. This publication's "Trainspotting" section — all the latest results and tables, beautifully laid out — was something I could pore over with my mouth open for a worrying amount of time.

Back at the Goldstone, with the points totting up, the additional good news on Saturday was that the crowd

paid full attention to the match instead of merely using the occasion to denounce the chairman, as has become the famous custom. "Archer out" is still, understandably, a regular cry, but, from the family enclosure anyway, it was the game that mattered. Two goals for Brighton, then one for Swansea! Then another for Brighton! Then another for Swansea! It was damned exciting.

At a previous Seagulls match, chants of "Archer out" broke out just as the lads were racing towards the goal, when "Come on!"

would have been a tad more encouraging. But nowadays, perhaps, "Archer out" is simply a given of British football. It goes without saying. Last week, the *Evening Argus* had a picture of a Sherpa on Mount Everest, holding up a sign that said "Archer Out", and to be honest, it came as no surprise.

Meanwhile, it's good to know about the family seats. It's just a shame I haven't got a family, and (despite efforts) can't pass for an under-ten. In the grand post-Taylor scheme of things, I just wish clubs had considered the full range of football-fan requirements, and instituted a "Softies" Enclosure or a Namby-Pamby Bench. Having no pride whatsoever, I'd be there like a shot.

## I'd be there in the Softies' Enclosure'



Henman plays a backhand return during his second-round defeat by Korda in Milan

# Wily Czech fells Henman

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

TIM HENMAN had the tables turned on him by Petr Korda, whom he beat in the Australian Open, when the Great Britain No 1 was defeated 6-4, 6-4 by the Czech left-hander, in the second round of the Italian Indoor Championships in Milan yesterday.

Korda, who four years ago was ranked No 5 in the world, returned Henman's first service superbly throughout the match and invariably came out the winner on baseline rallies. What made Henman's defeat more frustrating, however, was the fact that he hit far more first services into court than his rival and also struck ten aces to Korda's six.

The wily Czech, now ranked No 29, showed outstanding

anticipation when receiving, however, and though his service was not as quick as the Briton's, he dropped only 14 points in his ten service games.

Korda's opponent in the quarter-finals will be David Prinosil, who completed an unexpected 6-7, 6-2, 6-3 victory over Mark Philippoussis of Australia. The writing was on the wall after Philippoussis lost six games in succession in the second and third sets against the world No 59.

"I played better today than I did against Michael Stich," Prinosil, who hit more aces (15-13) than his big-serving opponent during the two-hour contest, said. "In the first set of the match I did not serve so well, but I was not surprised by this victory."

"Mark is a very good player but he was only playing his third match of the season," the Czech-born German said.

Henman may lose several ranking places in the next two quarter-finals, will be David Prinosil, who completed an unexpected 6-7, 6-2, 6-3 victory over Mark Philippoussis of Australia. The writing was on the wall after Philippoussis lost six games in succession in the second and third sets against the world No 59.

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